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EDWARD HUTTON

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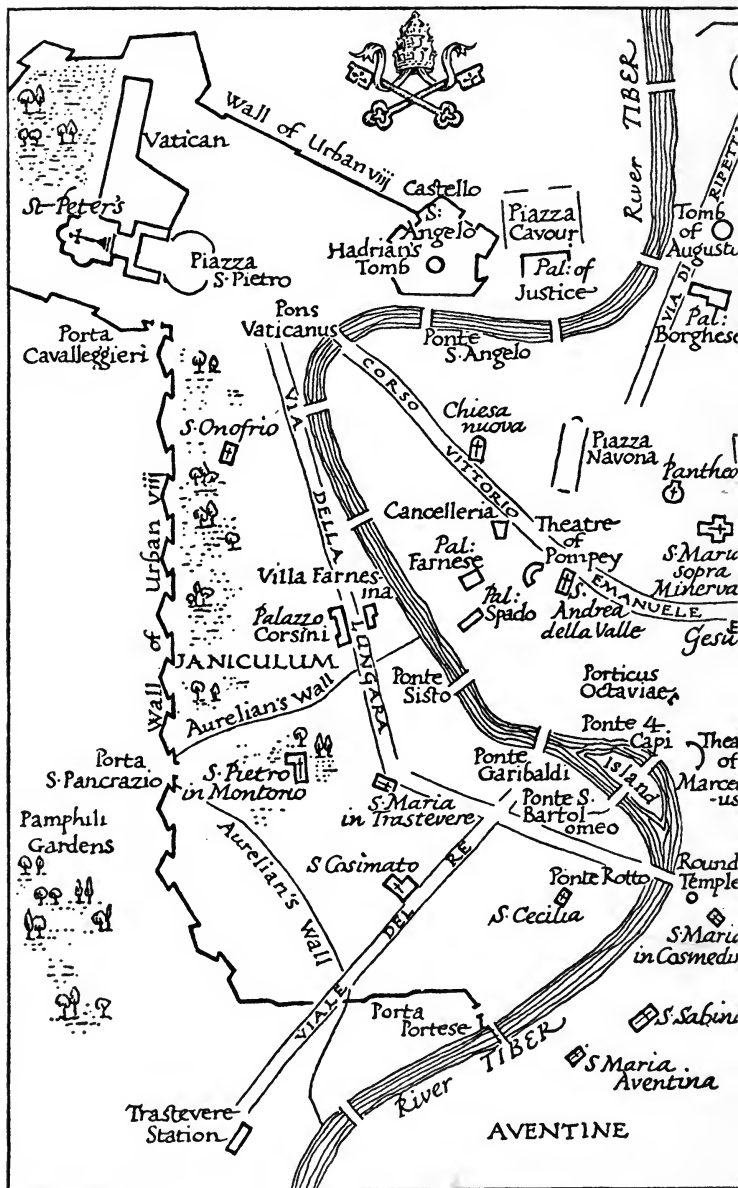
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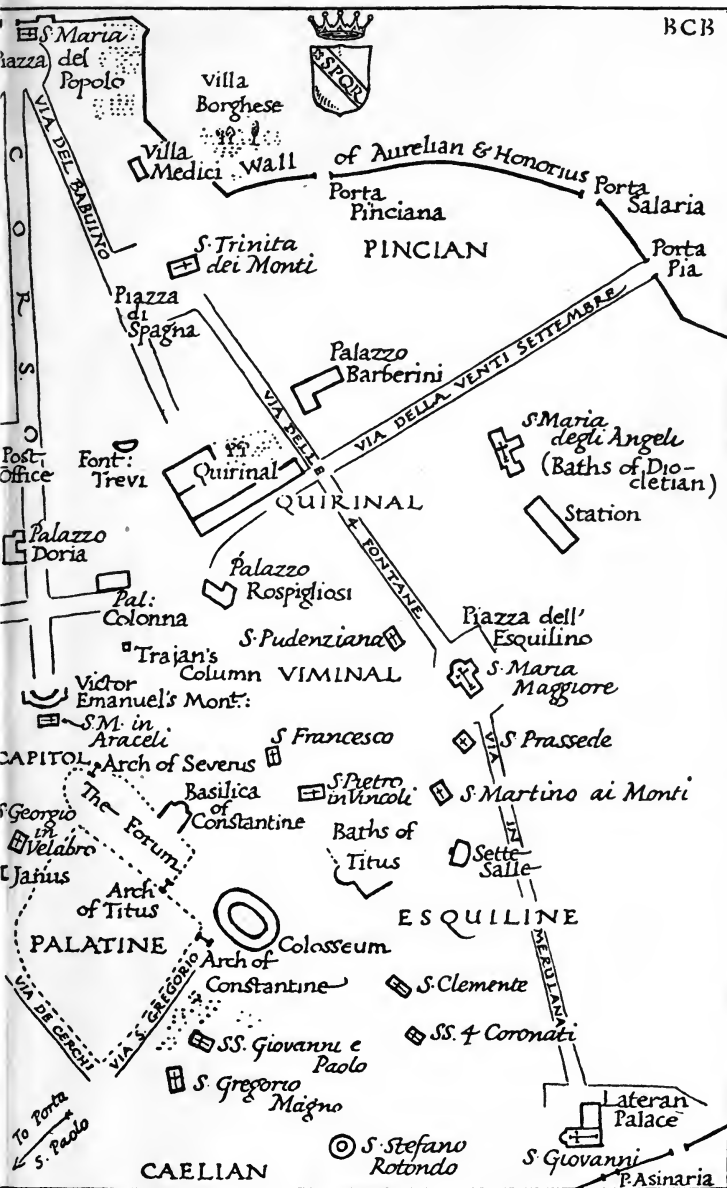




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WHEN DONE WITH, RETURN AT ONCE TO ITS  
PLACE ON THE SHELVES





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ROME

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

FREDERIC UVEDALE: A ROMANCE  
STUDIES IN THE LIVES OF THE SAINTS  
ITALY AND THE ITALIANS  
THE CITIES OF UMBRIA  
FLORENCE AND NORTHERN TUSCANY  
COUNTRY WALKS ABOUT FLORENCE  
THE CITIES OF SPAIN  
SIGISMONDO MALATESTA  
IN UNKNOWN TUSCANY  
SIENA AND SOUTHERN TUSCANY

*In preparation*





ST. PETER'S FROM THE JANICULUM

# ROME

BY

EDWARD HUTTON

WITH 16 ILLUSTRATIONS IN COLOUR BY

MAXWELL ARMFIELD

AND 12 OTHER ILLUSTRATIONS



NEW YORK

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1909

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~~READING ROOM~~

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# ROME

## I

### AVE ROMA IMMORTALIS

**I**T was on an April evening in my earliest manhood, as I stood on the vast bastion of the Janiculum in the sudden silence of the hour after the sunset—Rome was looking terrible as a crater under the conflagration of the sky—that I seemed to realise for the first time the true aspect of a place so augustly familiar, which, as Dante has perceived, Nature herself has formed for universal dominion—*ad universaliter principandum*—and out of which has risen all Europe and our Faith, all that is really worth having in the world.

It was my last evening in Rome. On the morrow I was to return to the North. All day I had wandered aimlessly about looking for my lost illusions, till, weary at last, I had come towards evening to sit beside the parapet of the Janiculum, turning all things over in my heart as I watched the sun set over the City. How well I remember it!

It seems to me that I was but a child then, that I had believed in everything, and was altogether discouraged and dismayed, for Rome had been like a stranger to me. With an incredible loyalty I had dreamed of her in the North (shall I confess it?) as the city of Horatius, of the Gracchi,

of Scipio Africanus, of Sulla and Marius, of Cæsar, of that spiritual Cæsar, too, who for so many ages has appointed there his dwelling, communing with the Eternal in an eternal place. And I had found instead a new city spoiled by old things, full of all the meanness and ugliness of modern life, the rush and noise of electric trams, even in the oldest and narrowest ways, a place of change and destruction.

Take heart, I had continually told myself, even on the first morning beside the imprisoned Tiber bridged with iron, among the new slums about the Vatican, in the brickfield of the Forum : take heart, the Capitol remains. Therefore, not without thankfulness, eagerly, not without joy, I had made my way along the ruined Corso to the Piazza Venezia.

Well, I had rejoiced too soon. I was prepared for destruction. Every newspaper in Christendom had wedded the modern Roman with the Vandal and the Hun. I was prepared for destruction, but for destruction heaped on destruction, for a rascal impudence that might put Phocas to shame, I confess it at once, I was not prepared. Nor is it easy for me to tell of what I saw. For there, where long and long ago the Temple of Juno passed into the gentler dominion of Madonna Mary, the modern barbarian had raised indeed a fitting monument to his king, who resembles great Cæsar in this alone that in the heaven of the populace he has become divine. Was it a temple or a tomb, that ghastly erection of ghostly stone, that, standing on a ruined convent, seemed to bellow like Behemoth, trusting that it might draw not Jordan, but Rome into its mouth ? Indeed, the conquerors of Rome so often mere bandits, as we know, have ever

sought to dominate the imagination of the multitude by the enormity of their buildings : the policy of the Cæsars was the policy of the Popes. It has remained, however, I told myself, for the kingdom of Italy to surpass both Cæsar and Pope in vulgarity, rapacity, and insolence : so hard a thing. Yet this ridiculous Colossus, thought I, founded on a raped convent, stands there as the monument of the third Rome, which, having so unfortunately outlived both Cæsar and Pope, bows down at last before the inimitable image of this Switzer a-horseback.

It was these things, I remember, that rose before me at the close of my last day in the City as I waited for the sunset by the parapet of the Janiculum. So that I said in my heart : Rome is not any more immortal ; all that is gone for ever. It is finished. Let us pass by and be silent.

Nevertheless, it was in this moment of despair, of denial, that I began to understand.

An incredible majesty had descended upon the City and the hills. Little by little that far horizon, glorious with mountains, was hidden in the grey evening ; the desert of the Campagna was changed into a vast shadow ; like a snake of sullen gold the Tiber crept through the twilight into the darkness and the sea ; only the City loomed out of the night like some mysterious and lovely symbol, a visible gesture of the infinite, decisive and affirmative, never to be recalled or modified.

The material world, that close, impassable prison, seemed just then to be dissolving before my eyes, and it was as though in the silence I had heard again those words, so full of assurance and all gladness :

*Sed confidite, Ego vici mundum*: Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world. And all my heart was changed suddenly, and in a moment I was comforted.

But that was long ago. To-day as I look down on Rome in the long summer that is so quiet still within her walls—is it that I have grown wiser, or may be only older?—I find her immortality not alone in the continuity of Nature or in such a vision as that of which I have spoken, but in the City herself, in the life of the City I have come in some dim way to understand and to reconcile with my dreams. And, yes, it is true, *Ave Roma Immortalis* is for me no longer merely a greeting of love, but the expression of a fact that, little by little, has impressed itself upon me till I recognise it at every turn of the road, at every moment of the day. I feel the eternity of Rome as I feel the brief sweetness of every passing moment there: she seems to me as eternal and persistent as life, as strangely various, as mysteriously secret. In her name is married domination and love, ROMA-AMOR, which none may ever divide or separate; they smile at one everywhere, indissolubly one, confounded in her, yes, even in the Forum, where in a ruined temple of the Empire there is a ruined church of the Middle Age cheek by jowl with a Renaissance or Baroque building amid the wildflowers of our spring.

You think that a kind of materialism chiefly rhetorical? Very likely. But at least let me remind you that it is not only in the stones of the City that old and new are confounded in her life. Consider then the Paganism of her religion, of what she has made, after all so finely, of Christianity. Call to mind what you have seen in S. Maria in Aracoeli, in S.

Teodoro, above all in S. Agostino. No, it is the ages that pass away ; Rome remains.

You, too, in your youth, perhaps, have come to her this very day, and are distressed and bewildered even as I was by her bizarre aspect, her confusion and noise : perhaps even something terrible about her, never to be understood or reconciled with your thoughts of her, has brought tears to your eyes.

Consider awhile. Was she not ever Cosmopolis ? That babel you hear in the Forum any spring morning, Horace heard it too, and Aurelius, and S. Austin. It might seem, if you can but bear to think it, that Rome was never so true to herself as she is to-day. Her very eccentricities confound her with her past. That strange desire and eagerness to build, now everywhere visible there, how damnable it seems, yet what is it after all but the old necessity of Emperor and Pope to impress the people, to touch the imagination of the crowd in whom, not less or otherwise than the new monarchy, they lived and moved and had their being ?

And the destruction ? But she lives by it ; it is her oldest secret. The vandalism of the Cæsars became the vandalism of the Popes and is now the vandalism of the modern kingdom. You think the monument to Victor Emmanuel merely the result of the vulgarity and insolence of our times ? Even so, I am with you. But it is the successor of Nero's Golden House and of S. Peter's Church, nor, though its victims have been so many and so precious, may they compare with what those demanded ; and since it promises to be the least beautiful of the three, it need not be the most lasting. For Rome is never per-

fectured, but is always in transformation. Her life is as various as our own, responding, if you can but see it, to every mood of your heart. It is thus that she is the most human of cities—not the city of the soul, perhaps, as Shelley called her, for the soul has here no place of abiding, but certainly the city of man who persists and lives by destruction and is never satisfied.

Who can tell her age, or prophesy when she shall be no more? For the advent of Romulus was not her natal day, nor the death of Augustulus her funeral. She was before Evander came, and has outlived the Romans by more than a millennium. As her beginning is hidden from us, so is her end.

In this, too, is her eternity, that men have always longed for her as for an insatiable mistress. She is the hope of the world and its despair: her life is a consuming fire that none may quench. Yet it is this which, like true idolaters, we have thought to find in the Forum among her discarded stocks and stones, disturbing even the profoundest sleep to discover the secret of her immortality. O Foolishness! we have questioned the dead, and in the unbreakable silence have heard only the falling of dust on dust; but she is singing in the byways of the City, and her hands are clasped in ours.



## II

### THE CAPITOL

TO climb up to the Capitol to-day past the Trophies of Marius, between the statues of the Dioscuri into the Piazza built at the suggestion of Michelangelo, as a great and splendid chamber, one might think, for the equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius, is to come into a world of ghosts, of ghosts which have always ruled the world. In spite of its fame, perhaps even because of it, the Capitol has kept nothing of its antiquity, save the Gemonian steps and a few ruined boulders of the Tabularium. Before you is the Palazzo del Senatore a foundation of Boniface in 1389, which in the hands of Michelangelo and Sixtus v. became the modern building we now see. To the left is the Capitoline Museum built for the most part under Innocent x., after a design by Michelangelo, while to the right is the Palazzo dei Conservatori, a foundation of Nicholas v., rebuilt, again in the manner of Michelangelo, under Pius iv. in 1564. Nothing at all remains of the time of the Republic or the Empire ; only in the midst of the Piazza formed by these three palaces rides the philosophic Emperor as though in stoic contemplation, a ghost in the midst of ghosts, as it were an exile in his own city. The most famous spot in the world you might think has become nothing but a vast museum.

It is the same with the hills that on either hand tower over the Piazza, the true *Capitolium* to the right, the dwelling-place of Jupiter Capitolinus, which has returned to something of its primitive wildness of which Virgil speaks :

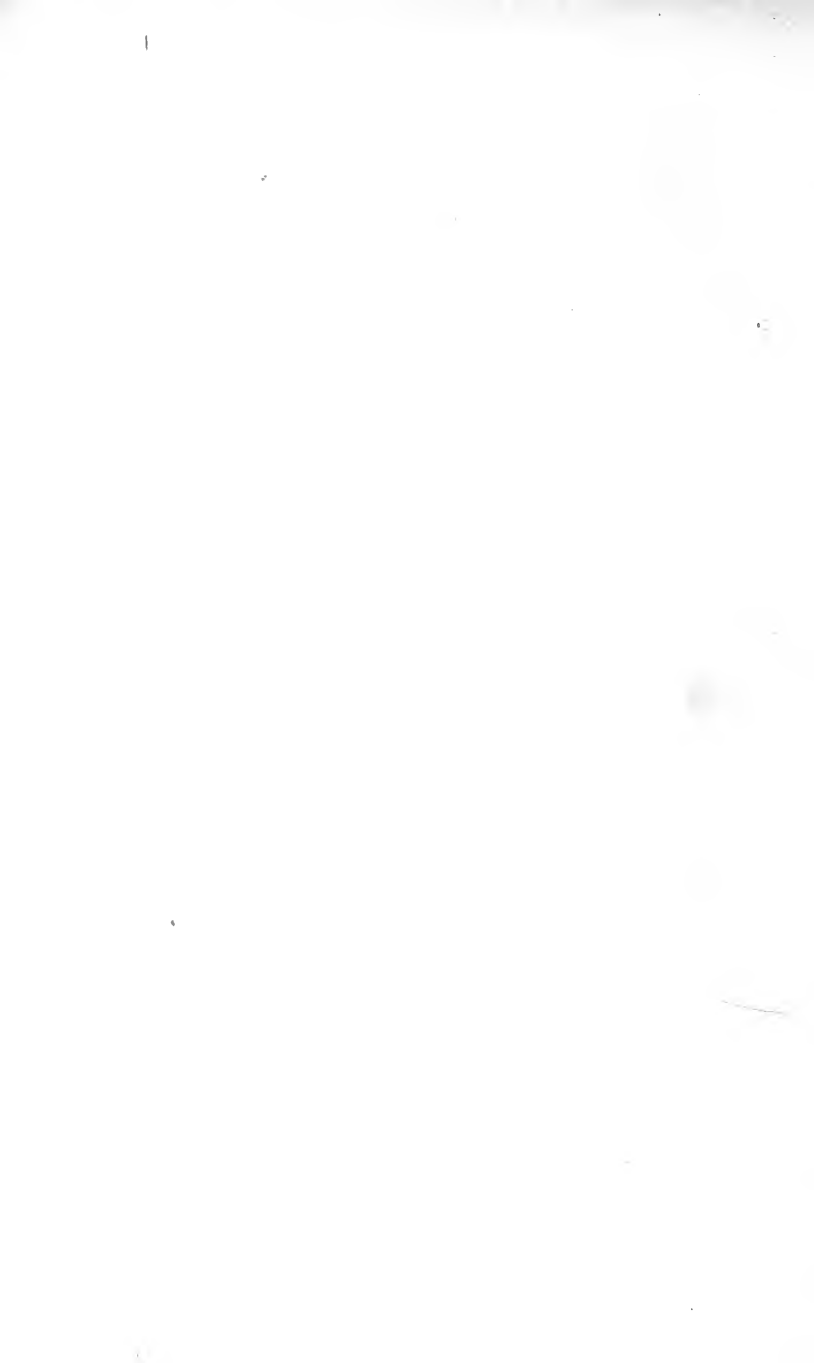
Aurea nunc, olim silvestribus horrida dumis.

and to the left the Arx the sacred citadel of Rome beside which stood the temple of Juno Moneta—Juno of warning, where Christianity has built a shrine to Madonna. And yet in spite of the absence of any building of the Rome of antiquity, it is chiefly of her you think amid the work of the Middle Age, of the Renaissance, of the world of to-day, that so strangely, it seems, at first at any rate, everywhere confronts you there on the caput and citadel of the world. Little by little, however, as you linger there you come to understand that as everywhere in Rome, you cannot divide the old from the new, nor Antiquity from the Middle Age, nor either from the modern world. In her immortal life the one has proceeded from the other, and was not made nor created anew. They were moods, as it were, of the City : nor can we say of anything eternal that it was young and grows old. For as a melody is lost in a melody so in her everliving soul antiquity passed into mediævalism, into modernity, each following other in perfect and lovely sequence ; and the last is there because of the first, the new because of the old.

And since this is the life of Rome, we shall find it perfectly expressed on the Capitol which has always, as it were, summed up the City and served for the whole world as a symbol of it. Because it was here



THE CAPITOL FROM THE FORUM



that Curtius died for the people, that Tiberius Gracchus fell in their cause, and Marcus Brutus, after the death of Cæsar, spoke in defence of the Republic and his crime, therefore in the Middle Age it was on the Capitol that Arnold of Brescia, Stefaneschi of Trastevere, Cola di Rienzo and Stefano Porcari would have proclaimed the Republic; and because of all these things it is there Italy has to-day set up her monument to him in whom, when all is said, she found again both unity and freedom.

It is true that the mere material continuity in brass and stone is not so manifest. Yet the bare fact that over and over again everything that has been built here has been swept away is indicative at least of the passionate love that has always surged around this hill. If in the Middle Age the home of the Senator was set here, it was not by chance; for the Capitol has always been the citadel of the Republicanism of the people, that, smouldering all through the Middle Age and the Renaissance, is even yet by no means extinguished. In some sort the Senator may still be said to dwell here on the Capitol, and the Palazzo dei Conservatori is even yet the meeting-place of the ancients of Rome. While in the Capitoline Museum opposite to it, the Romans have for ages placed their most precious possessions, those statues in marble and bronze carved or cast by their ancestors which of old adorned the Forum or the Palaces of the Cæsars.

It was Michelangelo, himself a passionate Republican and always so unwillingly the servant of princes, who brought hither the most priceless treasure of the City, that equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius, in gilded bronze, creating for it a magnificent chamber,

fairer far, we may believe, than that we see, which was contrived out of his design by his disciples. The statue is indeed a stranger here where it seems so perfectly in place, for of old it stood before the Arch of Septimius Severus in the Forum, till Sergius III., struck by its beauty perhaps, and looking for a champion, thinking it was Constantine, placed it in front of the Lateran Palace. That was in the first years of the tenth century. Then towards the end of the same century, when there seemed to all but a reprieve of less than forty years before the Day of Judgment, the end of the world, the Emperor Otho the Great set John XIII. on the Throne of the Fisherman against the popular will. The Barons, as always, ready for any excuse, roused the City, the Captains of the Regions, led by the Prior Peter the Prefect, followed them, and seizing Pope John out of the Lateran threw him into Castel S. Angelo, driving him at last to exile in Campania, till Conte Goffredo, the head and front of the mischief, being murdered, they set the Pope at liberty, who returned to Rome. Then came the Emperor at Christmas time to do justice on the Roman people. And he took the Captains of the Regions and hanged twelve of them, and Peter the Prefect he bound naked on an ass and set an earthen jar on his head and had him flogged through the City. And when he was dead he hung his body—what was left of it—by the hair to the head of the great bronze horse, on which, as he thought, Constantine rode before the Lateran, that all might see his justice on his enemies.

Called by the pilgrims Theodoric, by the people Quintus Curtius, and by the clergy Constantine, it



*Photo. Anderson*

MARCUS AURELIUS





stood for more than five hundred years before the Lateran after it had served Otho for a gallows. It was ever held in veneration by all, and in the wild joy of the Tribune of Rienzo the people filled the bronze belly of the horse with wine and water, so that water flowed from one of its nostrils and wine from the other. So greatly was it held in honour that though Michelangelo and the Pope had long wished to remove it from before the Lateran to its present position here on the Capitol, the Canons in whose care it was were only won to consent in 1538, demanding in acknowledgment of their rights payment from the Senators. So every year a bunch of flowers was and is still presented by the City to the Chapter: a custodian 'Custode del Cavallo' being appointed with a salary of ten scudi annually to guard it. And so well did Michelangelo understand the ever-living City, that he was not ashamed to make the pedestal out of one of the pillars of the Temple of the Dioscuri.

It is not, however, in the Piazza—that valley between the true Capitol and the Arx—that alone or even chiefly perhaps, we meet those ghosts which, haunting indeed the whole City, here more than elsewhere press upon us insistently, company by company. Climbing up past the Piazza dei Conservatori to the Tarpeian rock, *Capitoli immobile saxum*, we came upon that spot which for Virgil was the holiest in the City.

'Hoc, nemus, hunc' inquit 'frondoso vertice collem  
(quis Deus incertum est) habitat Deus: Arcades ipsum  
credunt se vidisse Iovem, cum saepe nigrantem  
aegida concuteret dextra nimbosque cieret.  
Haec duo praeterea disiectis oppida muris,  
reliquias veterumque vides monimenta virorum.

Hanc Ianus pater, hanc Saturnus condidit arcem :  
Ianiculum huic, illi fuerat Saturnia nomen.'

So Evander tells Aeneas, showing him the City. And indeed it was here that Saturn himself reigned in the Golden Age, before the Titans broke out of the custody of Orcus, and, piling Pelion on Ossa scaled Olympus. When the corn was sown and reaped on the hillside and there was a plenty for all, before war was born or any man thought to go armed, was it not up this hill they would pass, those fortunate folk singing at evening? Till one day Evander came from the Palatine across the marsh with Aeneas and showed him Saturnia in ruin. The Golden Age was over: but the hill bore the name Saturnus till the time of the Tarquins.

And after Aeneas was dead Romulus came hither, and, finding the place a forest of ilex, hoping for men, established there a refuge for slaves who were fugitive, and after the rape of the Sabine girls he built there a Temple not to peaceful Saturn, but to the God of spoils, Jupiter Feretrius.<sup>1</sup> Not much later the Sabines in revenge for the rape, under their king Titus Tatius, seized the fortress on the other height, not by valour, but by the wiles of a woman, Tarpeia, who loved the gold on the arms of the Sabine youths and felt too soon the weight of it.

Dimly from very far off, sometimes when I have waited there alone in that lonely place the coming of twilight, I have seemed to see her still, Tarpeia, priestess of Vesta, daughter of Spurius the Captain, as she came at sunset, straight and slim as a reed,

<sup>1</sup> Some think that this first temple of Jupiter was on the other height.

singing too, down the steep way to the valley, the earthen jar on her black head, to bring spring water for the evening sacrifice. Unharméd for all the war and vengeance, for she served that Goddess who had no statue but was living fire, who was served with bare feet, she came slowly, dreamily down the hillside in the sunset, and found Titus Tatius beside the fountain—drinking. It was the golden bracelet on his arm that she desired, as he saw doubtless in a moment. He gave it her, and shyly she took it.

‘Is it for me,’ she said, desire in her eyes, ‘this that you wear on your left arm?’ for she knew not the name of gold. And he answered, ‘Give me the fortress to-night; and not only I but all of us will give you . . . what we wear on our left arms.’ Well, if she were a traitor, he lied: yet it was she paid for all.

And it was so. For that night the Sabines went up stealthily to the gate, and Tatius led them. Then she who had forsworn her people opened to them—the gate was on the height above the arch of Septimius Severus—and Tatius as he passed struck her down under the weight of that which he bore on his left arm, but it was a shield; and as they entered each did likewise. ‘So perish all traitors!’ said they doubtless. And when they had taken the city, they buried her at dawn under the rock that bears her name. But as they tell you, imprisoned in the hill, she sits there weeping to this day. And when Tatius was dead Romulus once more seized the Capitol and there Numa Pompilius, his successor, who founded the Roman religion, built a Temple to Fides Publica.

It was Tarquinius Superbus, the last king of Rome, who about 535 B.C. built the great Temple his father had vowed to Jupiter on the Capitol. He began it with the spoil of the Volscian war, and it was in digging the foundation, as it is said, that that sign was found which named the hill and promised, as was foretold by the Augurs, the lordship of Italy to Rome—a human head, still bloody. The proud king, however, did not live to see the dedication of the Temple he had built, for it was carried out by the first consuls of the Republic: who set up there the rude earthen image of Jupiter arrayed in splendid robes. For hundreds of years this Temple served as the holiest shrine in Rome. Thither the greatest generals of the Republic, the heroes of the Punic wars among them, came in Triumph. And then as though to symbolise the approaching fall of the Republic which had consecrated it, in the time of Marius it was burned to the ground. Sulla rebuilt this Temple, but it too was destroyed and so was that which Vespasian set there to replace it, but with no better fortune; while the last and most splendid building of all was looted and spoiled by Genseric who carried off the statues to his African Palace and stole away the tiles of gilded bronze. And none thought to gainsay him, for the Galilean had conquered.

As it is with the southern height, so it is with the northern, where of old stood the Arx and the temple where the geese wakened Manlius on that wonderful night when the Gauls were already scaling the citadel. No fragment remains of that temple which Juno yielded to Madonna Mary, nor a single stone of the sacred

Arx of Rome. And, indeed, one is like to forget them altogether as one wanders in that lofty brown church of the Friars which, as though moved by the *genius loci*, seems still to guard and keep the city. Set on so sheer a height, the temple of old was only to be approached from the Forum, but in the fourteenth century of Christ, when the Church of S. Maria in Aracoeli was rebuilt by the Franciscans, the towering flight of steps from the Temple of the Sun on the Quirinal Hill was brought hither and set up to bridge the precipice before the west front of the church, so that one might climb to it, though hardly, from the Piazza Aracoeli.

Those old precious buildings, the very citadel of Rome and the temples round about it, might seem to have no part in the Church of S. Maria in Aracoeli. And yet since it has been the courtesy of the Catholic Church, here in Rome at any rate, to preserve for her own use and our joy, all or almost all, that was best in Paganism, it is not without delight we learn that the title of S. Maria in Aracoeli is not altogether of Christian origin. For it seems that it was here Augustus set up an altar to the Son of God, prophesied by the oracle, that Sibyl to whom the Church still appeals in the marvellous Sequence of the Mass for All Souls :—

Dies irae, dies illa  
Solvat saeculum in favilla  
Teste David cum Sibylla.

Restless, it seems, with thoughts of the future of that Empire he had founded with so much craft and patience, Augustus, growing old, as it is said, demanded of Apollo: 'After me who will rule the

world? ' But the God was dumb. Twice he asked the same question, but still Apollo was silent. Then when again he besought him a third time he was answered in these strange words by the priestess: ' A Hebrew child, a God Himself and stronger than all the Gods, bids me leave Heaven to give Him place. Invoke me then no more ; for it is in Hades now that I shall dwell in sadness.' And for this cause the Emperor set up an altar to the Divine Child, with the inscription, *Ara filii Dei*. So the place was called the Altar of Heaven, and there they built S. Mary a church. And so it happens, as though in memory of the oracle, that the birth of the Son of God is still celebrated there as nowhere else in Rome : and again, as though in memory of Juno who was Queen of Heaven or ever the gentler dominion of Madonna Mary, the children hold here their festival in honour of the Jesus Parvulus, but not, for us, at any rate, without some reminder too of the old honour due to Juno, who presided over the marriage of all women even as Mary does now, and was the especial protectress of children.

Some say that the Church of S. Maria was founded by Constantine, but the Benedictine chroniclers assure us that it was built by Gregory I. in 591. However that may be, in the eighth century certainly the church was known as Sancta Maria de Campitolio, which reminds us that all this part of Rome, the tenth Region, that included the Capitol, the Forum, the Colosseum and the Palatine Hill was by them called Campitelli.

Those Benedictines who served the church, and, certainly by the year 882, had built their monastery

beside it, gradually possessed themselves of the whole Capitol, which at that time must have been wild and savage enough to please even S. Benedict. In 1015 we find their Abbot signing himself, *Ego Dominicus Abbas Capitolii*; and Anacletus II., Antipope, more than a hundred years later, in 1130, confirms them in their possession of it. Then in 1250 Innocent IV. expelled the monks and gave their heritage to the Franciscans, who still serve the church though their convent has been destroyed, with so many other precious things, to make way for the monument to Victor Emmanuel. Meanwhile the Capitol had become the focus, as it were, of the undying Republicanism of the Roman people, which, smouldering always, burst out at times in those great flames of anger which so often nearly consumed both Pope and Barons. The most glorious and the most renowned place in the ancient City became indeed the 'consulto' of the people, and was confirmed to them as such by Eugenius IV. in 1445, two years after his return to Rome, whence he had been ignominiously chased in 1434.

S. Maria in Aracoeli is now mainly a building of the fourteenth century, when it was largely restored and reconstructed, and the great flight of steps before the west doors added in gratitude for the escape of Rome from the Plague of 1348. Later restorations by Cardinal Caraffa in 1464, by Pius IV., who destroyed the old choir, and by Gregory XIII., who restored the splendid roof, have, however, left their inevitable mark.

Within, the church is one of the most impressive in Rome. Divided into a nave and two aisles upheld

by twenty-two ancient columns from many different buildings, it is at once austere and simple, moving us in a way that S. Pietro, S. Maria Maggiore or S. Giovanni in Laterano, in spite of their splendour of space and proportion, always fail to do. Here we seem really to have come upon a place that has always been dedicated to God. And this is so in spite of the appalling furniture and decoration that too often spoil the chapels: not that, however, which we come to first, on the right, in the south aisle beside the west door. Lost though it is in an almost complete darkness, on some fortunate day, just before sunset, you may descry without too much weariness the work of Pinturicchio, those frescoes of the life of S. Bernardino which he painted for Ludovico Buffalini, advocate to the Papal Consistory, who died, as an inscription on a stone in the pavement tells us, in 1506. It seems that a deadly feud had for many years raged between the Buffalini and the Baglioni of Perugia, which S. Bernardino had contrived to extinguish. It was to celebrate this strange peace that Pinturicchio was commissioned to decorate the chapel. Concealed for long by a wooden panelling, these frescoes were only discovered in the end of the eighteenth century, which may account for their excellent preservation.

The tiny Gothic chapel, lighted only by a small window, is 'architecturally decorated' in monochrome, the walls being divided by painted pilasters, hung with masses of fruits, caught in with ribbons. The frescoes are separated by tall, slender candelabra with blown flames, the columns being painted with grotesque masks, sometimes grave, sometimes hideous or laughing, animals and little Loves, while behind the altar



a procession passes of soldiers and their captives, some laden with spoil, some bearing torches, one, who seems to be the leader, on a triumphal car with a naked prisoner bound behind it, another on horseback dragging a naked woman. It is a scene well designed, full of decorative power and fine drawing, more easily discerned, perhaps, since the work is in monochrome. Above, in the roof, the four Evangelists sit in contemplation. Then on the west wall, on either side of the window, Pinturicchio has painted two other windows in pretence. Through that nearest to the altar, God the Father looks in, surrounded by cherubim and in His hand is a globe. To the right is painted a series of arches in wonderful perspective, and there in the midst is a little Love bearing the arms of the Buffalini. Far away a landscape opens under a ruined arch, and above is a lunette of Madonna with her little Son, and under His feet are two other Loves in concord. Before Him kneels S. Bernardino himself, about to receive the habit of Love, of S. Francis, for the sake of which he has cast away power and splendour and desire, the fair robes, the gold, and the jewels that lie neglected beside him. Not far away—and God watches him for love, it is for this perhaps He has peeped into the chapel this evening—kneels S. Francis about to receive the Stigmata. And under the dim window two of his friars recount his ever new story to those three listeners who are so caught by the tale that they do not even turn to see that fair procession that passes behind them.

But it is on the eastern wall, and above the altar, that Pinturicchio has done really his best ; and indeed those frescoes are among the finest of his works. In the arches above the wall on the left is S. Bernardino

in sackcloth, almost naked, leaving his gay home and fair comrades in Siena to go 'into the wilderness.' And all that fantastic city is come out to see him, though he marks them not, nor those flowers, hyacinths and anemones and the lilies of the field, that 'proud pied April' has spread under his feet; nor the pleasant voice of the stream singing to itself as he passes, nor the fair towers of Siena which he is leaving behind him. It is as though he had taken 'Our sister the Death of the Body' as a Bride. And indeed, beneath, Pinturicchio has painted his Funeral Procession. The lines of the marble pavement stretch away between the cloisters and the colonnades to a temple and those country places which are certainly not to be found in any earthly city. It is a place in that imaginative country, that romantic landscape of which Pinturicchio was almost the creator, full of every delicate fancy, strange fruits and frail flowers and fantastic palaces in a world to which only he had the key. In the foreground they bear away the saint, already in the embrace of his bride, to burial, and there follow after him sorrowfully all that gay or wretched company he had served so well: the beggars he so loved, the friars who were his brethren, the women who sought him out, the children upon whom he had compassion. And there, too, out of the long and beautiful loggia on the left comes Messer Avvocato Lodovico Buffalini, whom he had reconciled with his enemy. At the saint's feet two babies dance and sing, unconscious of our loss, and there beside them, wrapped in swaddling clothes, is the Bambino Gesù Himself, or that miraculous image of Him—is it?—which is the most precious possession of this very church.

Only less lovely, though still full of that 'light that never was on sea or land,' the nimble air of a heavenly country, is the Glorification of the Saint over the altar. Christ in the heaven of this heaven, which has not forgone the sun as was told us, stands on a cloud in a mandorla of cherubim, while six angels there sing and play the songs of Paradise, and at His feet two seraphs, crowned with light and bearing each the Lily of Annunciation, hold aloft for S. Bernardino the crown of glory which fadeth not away. Yet He in His love of us seems loth to leave us, has indeed turned, yes, even in the Elysian fields, to bless and to remind us once more—is it of the Prince of Life? He stands as it were on a hillock, lifting His right hand in blessing, a little anxious about us even yet: and on either side S. Louis of Toulouse, the patron of Lodovico Buffalini, and S. Antonio of Padua are busy with Litanies. So they have waited on the steep way to the delectable city, in the very country about it, it would seem, in a little valley shaded with the palm and the cypress, on some magical sea coast, while far and far away the mountains shine, of blue and amethyst and rose in the evening light—in the land of Heart's Desire.

Leaving so delicate a dream, the rest of the chapels, in this south aisle, at least, seem cold and almost consciously half-hearted in their welcome. And it is not indeed till we come to the Savelli chapel in the south transept that we find anything to interest us at all. But there at least we come upon a witness to the early fame of Aracoeli. The Savelli were one of the first Roman families, and in the thirteenth century they built themselves a chapel here, and buried there Pope Honorius IV. of their house in 1266 in what has

proved to be the first papal monument that has come down to us in its completeness. Beside him lie Randolfo and Andrea his daughter, in a pagan sarcophagus decorated with reliefs of fruit and flowers, while the monument to Randolfo is from the design of Giotto. In the same tomb with the Pope lies his mother, Vanna Aldobrandesca, while in the great choir another Savelli, a cardinal who died in 1498, lies in a tomb by Andrea Bregno.

Passing thence before the High Altar we come upon those two Ambones from which the Epistle and Gospel are sung. Possibly the work of the Cosmati, and certainly of their school, they are exquisite examples of thirteenth-century work in mosaic.

Not far away toward the north transept the little Tempio, the Cappella Santa di S. Elena marks the site of the altar Primogeniti Dei, and there lies Queen Helena, while close by sleeps another Queen, Catharine of Bosnia, who died in 1478.

In the Madonna chapel here lies one, Crivelli—he was Archdeacon of Aquitaine—under a marble slab carved with his effigy by Donatello. Trampled as it has been by the feet of many generations, all the features have been worn away ; but even when it was new it can never have been one of Donatello's happier works, cannot have compared for instance with the similar tomb he made at Siena for Bishop Pecci.

In the north transept itself is a fine monument to Cardinal Matteo di Acquasparta, the General of the Franciscans in 1302 whom Dante praised and Boniface VIII. sent to face the Florentines. It is a work of the school of the Cosmati, possibly by Johannes Cosma himself. On the lid of the tomb the Cardinal lies

in his pontifical robes, while angels lift the curtains that shelter him; above, S. Francis presents the deceased to the Madonna and Child, while close by stands S. John the Evangelist. On the keystone of the arch, which, like the pillars, is covered with mosaic patterns, is a painted bust of our Lord.

It is the second chapel in the left aisle that at Christmas time is the shrine at which all worship, for there the Bambino of Aracoeli, that little wooden figure which, as they say, was carved by a friar in Jerusalem and finished by an angel, lies amid the hay, the chapel being transformed into a stable, while the careful ox and the ass that will soon bear Madonna and Him into Egypt stand by, and Mary and Joseph receive how gladly the shepherds and the three kings. It was S. Francis who invented the Presepio, and here, in Aracoeli, it is of a peculiar splendour, not only for the sake of S. Francis but because the church possesses in the figure of the Bambino one of the best miracle-working images in Rome. Covered with jewels and clothes of rich stuffs, all Rome seems to come to venerate the Bambino. The ducal house of Torlonia still, it seems, or at least till within the last few years, lends it her great coach and her servants in livery when it is borne to the sick which are not only poor or ignorant persons, but even Princes of the Church and such, who still are found to believe in it. For myself I like it not at all; it is neither Pagan nor Christian, but a mere superstition without meaning and without beauty. I prefer—how much—to watch the children who between the Feast of the Epiphany and Twelfth Night recite verses in honour of the little Prince of Life, and without self-consciousness or any fear at all speak of

one, little like themselves, whom they have loved. And, it seems to me, after the worship, the quite Pagan worship of the great Madonna of S. Agostino, that is the most Roman sight in Rome ; a ceremony, if you will, altogether happy and in place here in the Capitol, by the Altar of the First-born of God in the Church of S. Mary, that was the Temple of Juno, the protectress of children, and one in which that Paganism and Christianity which I have loved seem at last to be friends.

### III

#### THE FORUM

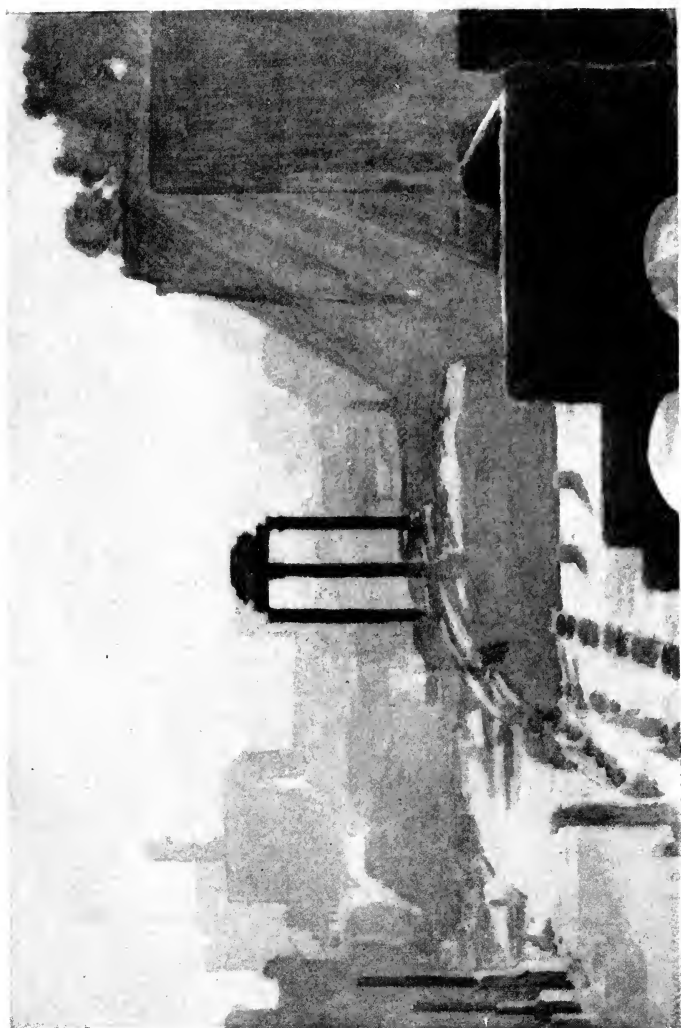
IF the Capitol was the citadel of Rome, the true *Caput* of the world, the symbol, as it were, of the domination of the City, on coming into the Forum we realise at once that this was its heart, the focus of that wonderfully catholic, religious, political, and economic life, the very centre of its being. Always the true Piazza of Rome, since the day when (according to Dionysius of Halicarnassus) Romulus and Tatius, the one from the Capitol, the other from the Quirinale, descended into the valley to make friends, it served alike as market-place, court of justice, and public promenade. Nor did it lose its pre-eminence when in the course of ages the Fora multiplied themselves, and other market-places were built for the sale of cattle, or of fish, or of vegetables.<sup>1</sup> And if this was so during the years of the Republic, when the Empire rose it was not less the meeting-place of the City, bridging as it did the gulf between the Capitol and the Palatine Hill. When Julius Cæsar wished to impress the people, he built there, and all the ambition of the Emperors but served to make more splendid that which had always been pre-eminently the Forum Romanum. Nor with the treason of Constantine the Apostate did it fall into decay. Indeed it remained

<sup>1</sup> Forum Boarium, Forum Piscarium, Forum Olitorium.

almost perfect until the seventh century when, as the column erected by a decayed Senate to the tyrant Phocas bears witness, it was still considered the greatest honour in the world to be remembered there. If, after that time, it fell into ever greater ruin, it was yet here from the heart of Rome that the vandal Popes stole the treasures which adorned their newer city, so that the Forum became a quarry, and thus out of the very heart of the ancient city was hewn the Rome of the modern world. While the Renaissance did not stay the vandalism of the Church, it yet filled the hearts of men with an old remembrance ; and therefore Pope Paul III., when in 1536 Charles v. returned from Tunis, thinking to do him the highest honour, decreed him a Triumph along the old Via Sacra under the arch of Titus through the Forum to the Capitol. It is from this time, however, that the Forum began to be transformed into the Campo Vaccino, that beautiful desert which Poussin and Claude and Turner have so loved. Paul III. had ruthlessly destroyed houses and churches to make that Triumphal Way for the enigmatic Emperor. Some fifty years later Sixtus v. began to throw into the morass of ruins his predecessor had made, the débris of the buildings he too in his turn had destroyed in planning the Rome which, for the most part, we now see. Having murdered Liberty and mutilated its dead body the Papacy sought to bury its crime from the eyes of the Roman people. Thus in the centuries that followed was formed the beautiful graveyard of the Campo Vaccino.

It was to impress the Roman people, to found their government more firmly on the wonder and awe





THE FORUM, EARLY MORNING



of the Plebs that the Republic had made the Forum so splendid, that Augustus adorned it, that the Emperors built there those Triumphal Arches which are still the wonder of the world. For a like reason the Popes destroyed it all and built too after their fashion. And now the modern kingdom of Italy, assuredly not less vandal than the Papacy, having destroyed the destroyers, has, with an enormous and learned patience, uncovered once more the ruins of its ancestors if so be it may gather from that ancient splendour some new glory for its already faded laurels. It is, indeed, a resurrection we see when we look to-day across the broken ruins of what was once the Forum Romanum.

And indeed as you walk to-day along the Sacred Way, certainly not without regret for the lost beauty of the Campo Vaccino, you are reconciled at last, not by the discoveries of the indefatigable Giacomo Boni, but by Nature herself who has already re-established her kingdom and sown even among the stones the wildflowers of the spring. Yes, the Forum is still green with bays and grey with olive. Are there not laurels—ah like bronze—among the ruins of Cæsar's Temple; do not the lilacs, purple and white, still spread their shadow on the stones and fill the Via Nova with their perfume? It is Nature herself who has come in triumph along the Sacred Way, while the very stones have cried out *Io, Triumphe*. Ah, long and long ago the cruel trumpets have been silent, the slave behind the victor no longer utters the slave's warning, for Scipio is not more dead than Cæsar, and all the tears of their prisoners have been dried, therefore the flowers are come as though to assure us that there is

no Triumph that shall endure but the Triumph of Love. Here, where the masters of the world have passed at last to the Capitol, and Emperor after Emperor has striven to outdo the dead in glory, where the greatest names in the world echo, how faintly, after all, beside the most despicable, and all are mixed in a mere rumour of oblivion, we pass, softly, softly, looking for the flowers.

And certainly it emphasises the meaning we may find perhaps in their frail beauty, our distrust, too, of all that cruel glory, to learn how wide even here, even in the greatest matters, is the kingdom of forgetfulness. For it seems that the mere direction, the precise route certainly, of the most famous road in the world has been really unknown for ages, was more than doubtful even in antiquity, since both Varro and Festus tell us that the people were always uncertain which was indeed the Sacred Way, for no street bore then any written name.

Beginning, as these writers seem to suggest, in the neighbourhood of the temple of Lares, of the Colosseum, the Via Sacra, in the highest part of the Forum, by the Arch of Titus which was later built across it, turned immediately to the right, and passing before the portico of the Temple of Venus and Rome, wound thence to the left, and, passing the Temple of Vesta and the Regia, proceeded straight to the foot of the Capitol, leading thence by a winding way to the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus.

The Sacred Way thus marks for us very happily the true character of the Forum, which, as it suggests, was the centre of the life of the city, surrounded on all sides by temples, law courts, banks, and shops,

and there, too, were to be found the Rostra and the Comitium, while the Capitol closed it in on the west, the Palatine on the south.

That the temples which so closely surrounded the Forum should have been so many and of such magnificence bears witness, one may think, to the significance that religion has always had in the public life of Rome, in antiquity as in our own time. And here too we may discern something of that continuity of life, of custom, of tradition which is the eternity of Rome, for if to-day she worships, not without a certain enthusiasm and joy, Mary Madonna, of old it was another Virgo Veneranda who guarded the City and was adored in every household where two or three were gathered together at the hearth.

The most important, and certainly the most venerated of all the Roman deities, that surely not less than ours, were, as one may think perhaps, just shadows in the heart of a divinity certainly somewhere in the world, was Vesta. For since man has always felt the necessity of worship, he has expressed it from time to time as well as he could, not least adequately or without a very real beauty in the worship of Vesta, which summed up in itself the divinity, the holiness of the hearth, and all that it means in the life of the family, of the household, that little city within a city ; so that every dwelling would be in some sort a Temple of Vesta, and round the sacred hearth each day the whole family would assemble for their common meal, and thus united, their very union became an act of worship, and the meal a sacrifice to her and to the Penates.

She had not any graven image in marble, or in ivory and gold, but showed herself only in the Sacred Flame that burned continually there in her temple, which was, as it were, the universal hearth of Rome, uniting all the citizens of the State, yes, in spirit, into one family. And as the hearth stood in the midst of the old Roman house, so the Temple of Vesta stood in the midst of the Forum.

It was Numa, the second king of Rome, who, so the Romans liked to believe, was the author of their whole religious system. It was he, they said, who had founded the Temple of Vesta midway between the Palatine and the Capitoline Hills, building it in his own fashion of circular form with a conical roof, just one of those rustic dwellings of the earliest Latin peoples. And throughout its history it preserved its primitive form, its smallness and simplicity, as though to remind even that Eternal City of her humble origin. Burnt many times under the Republic, rebuilt last of all by Julia Domna, the wife of Septimius Severus, it too fell with the ruin of the Gods ; and with them was found again by the Renaissance during the last years of Paul III. in 1549, only to be utterly destroyed by the vandalism of the Papacy ; even the foundations being dug up to provide material for new buildings. Then the excavations were filled up and the destruction hidden, not, however, before a design of the ruins had been made which we still possess.

Beside the temple stands the *Domus Virginum Vestalium*, the House of the Vestal Virgins, those priestesses who guarded the Palladium on which the safety of the City depended, and tended the Sacred

Fire. Chosen by lot from among the daughters of twenty patrician houses named by the Pontifex Maximus, for thirty years they swore to devote themselves as maidens to the service of Vesta, and though at first they numbered but four they were later increased to seven. The whole City held them in the highest honour. Not only did a Lictor precede them in the streets, but the first places were reserved for them at the Public Games and Festivals ; while even the Consuls gave them precedence. Indeed they can have had little in common with the daughters of S. Benedict or the nuns of S. Theresa. It is true they had promised both a severe chastity and an absolute service, but these vows were rather material than spiritual. Nor did they give themselves to any heavenly bridegroom, but served indeed the goddess and the City, not for ever or even for their whole lives, but for thirty years, after which they might marry and bear children and in all ways conform to the reasonable life of the City, from which they had never thought for a moment of withdrawing their allegiance. Even during the period of their sacred service they were absolutely free to dispose of their property as they would, and they gave evidence too in the Courts, but without the customary oath. So honourable, indeed, was the character of their service that it was usual to entrust to them important wills and public treaties ; while to meet them by chance saved the worst criminal on his way to death. And as a crowning mark of the love and reverence with which they were regarded, the City conferred upon the Order the right of burial in the Forum, the highest honour she had to give.

Their dwelling seems to have been splendid and luxurious, and indeed, passing there to-day, in spite of its ruin we may gather some idea of its magnificence. There were baths, gardens, and fountains in abundance; fair statues,<sup>1</sup> of which many fragments remain, surrounded their courtyard, statues of the noblest of their company. But while their life was thus one of ease, honour, and splendour, the penalties for breaking their vows were terrible; for after being publicly whipped with rods, they were buried alive. Very few, however—not more than twenty—during the many centuries in which they were the pride and honour of the City, deserved these penalties. The most famous trial, that in which Domitian charged one of them with incest, falsely as it would appear, is regarded by Pliny certainly as a mad freak of that tyrant's cruelty.

'It seems,' he says in a letter to Cornelius Minicianus, who had already heard that Valerius Licinianus had been accused of seducing Cornelia, the chief of the Vestals, 'it seems that Valerius is teaching rhetoric in Sicily. Had you heard it? I do not think you can have done so, for the news is quite fresh. . . . You will say that it is all very sad and pitiful, but that a man who defiled his profession of letters by the crime of incest deserves to suffer. Well, it is true he confessed his guilt, but it is an open question whether he did so because he was guilty or because he feared even heavier punishment if he denied it. For Domitian was in a great rage and boiling over with fury because his witnesses had left him in the lurch. His mind was set on burying Cornelia

<sup>1</sup> One of especial beauty is now in the Museo Nazionale.



alive,<sup>1</sup> for he thought to make his age memorable by such an example of severity, and, using his authority as Pontifex Maximus, or rather exercising the cruelty of a tyrant and the wanton caprice of a despot, he summoned the rest of the pontiffs not to the palace, but to his villa at Alba. There, with a wickedness just as monstrous as the crime which he pretended to be punishing, he declared Cornelia guilty without summoning her before him or giving her a hearing, though he himself had not only committed incest with his brother's daughter, but had even caused her death, for she died of abortion during her widowhood. He immediately sent some of the pontiffs to see that his victim was buried alive and thus put to death. Cornelia invoked in turn the aid of Vesta and the rest of the Gods, and amid her cries, which were many, this was repeated most frequently: "How can Cæsar think me guilty when he has conquered and triumphed after my hands have performed the sacred rites?" It is not known whether her purpose was to soften Cæsar's heart or to deride him, whether she spoke the words to show her confidence in herself or her contempt of the Emperor. Yet she continued to utter them until she was led to the place of execution, and whether she were innocent or not, she certainly appeared to be so. Nay, even when she was being led down into the dreadful pit and her dress caught as she was being lowered, she turned and readjusted it, and when the executioner offered her his hand she declined it and

<sup>1</sup> Such was the punishment. The Pontifex Maximus—Domitian himself in this case—had her whipped, and then carried on a bier to the Campus Sceleratus near the Colline Gate (near the Acqua Felice) where she was buried alive.

drew back as though she put away from her with horror the idea of her chaste and pure body being defiled by his loathsome touch. Thus she preserved her sanctity to the last, and displayed all the tokens of a chaste woman, like Hecuba truly, "taking care that she might fall in seemly wise."

The Pontifex Maximus, who had thus so great a power over the Vestals and was in some sort their governor, had his official dwelling, the Regia, on the other side of the temple beside the Sacred Way. Scarcely anything remains of the house in which Julius Cæsar spent the last months of his life. He had chosen to occupy the Regia rather than to build or buy a house on the Palatine as Augustus did later, true to his habit of living always among the people, and indeed it was from the Regia he set out to go to the Senate on that fatal March morning in the year 44 B.C. Some hours later, his body, covered with no less than twenty-three wounds, was borne back hither through the Forum. 'Many of the conspirators,' says Plutarch, 'wounded each other as they were aiming blows at him.' As is well known, he died on the pedestal of Pompey's statue, 'so that Pompey seemed to preside over the work of vengeance.' That inexcusable murder shook the world, and in fact accomplished what Brutus professed most to dread, the establishment of a tyranny. 'Brutus and his conspirators,' says Plutarch again, 'yet warm from the slaughter'—Brutus himself had struck Cæsar in the groin—'marched in a body with their bloody swords in their hands from the Senate House to the Capitol, not like men that fled but with an air of gaiety and

confidence, calling the people to liberty, and stopping to talk with every man of consequence whom they met.' The Senate passed a general amnesty, and to reconcile all the factions decreed Cæsar divine honours. Next day, however, the body was exposed before the Rostra, though whether those not far from the Arch of Septimius Severus or those which Cæsar had himself established beside the temple of Castor and Pollux is doubtful. Wherever it may have been, there Antony harangued the people :—

But yesterday the word of Cæsar might  
Have stood against the world ; now lies he there,  
And none so poor to do him reverence.

Then he put them in possession of Cæsar's Will, when it was found that he had left every Roman ' a considerable legacy ' :—

To every Roman citizen he gives,  
To every several man, seventy-five drachmas. . . .  
Moreover, he hath left you all his walks,  
His private arbours and new-planted orchards,  
On this side Tiber ; he hath left them you  
And to your heirs for ever, common pleasures,  
To walk abroad, and recreate yourselves.  
Here was a Cæsar ! when comes such another ?

The Plebs could no longer be kept within bounds. ' They stopped the funeral procession,' says Plutarch, ' and tearing up the benches, with the doors and tables, heaped them into a pile and burned the body there,'—' in the sacred place ' as Shakespeare has it—the Via Sacra. Then snatching flaming brands from the pyre, some ran to burn the houses of the assassins, while others ranged the city to find the conspirators themselves and tear them in pieces ; but they had



taken such care to secure themselves that the people could not find one of them. There followed Philippi, Actium and the Empire.

We meet Cæsar again in the hour of his triumph before the Temple of Saturn, which after the Temple of Vesta was the most ancient and perhaps the most important religious building in the Forum. In the shadow of the Capitol, on the Sacred Way, it was built perhaps by the Tarquins, and consecrated by the Consuls Sempronius and Minucius in B.C. 497. Restored at the very beginning of the Empire in the first years of Augustus, and again after the great fire of 283 A.D. as the inscription tells us: S.P.Q.R. INCENDIO CONSUMPTUM RESTITUIT, eight of its columns are still standing. It was the State Treasury, and it is before those doors that we meet Cæsar.

Having reduced all Italy in sixty days without spilling a drop of blood he returned to Rome. The City was, it seems, quieter than he had expected, and, as was his way, for the greatest man in the world was one of the gentlest, he was kind and gracious to all. Metellus the Tribune, however, had the courage to oppose him when he would have taken money from the Treasury, here in the Temple of Saturn, alleging certain laws against it. But Cæsar answered: 'Arms and laws do not flourish together. If you object to what I am doing you have only to withdraw. War, as I say, will not allow of much speech. And even when I tell you this I am departing from my own right, for you and all whom I have found exciting a spirit of faction against me are in my hands.' Yet still the Tribune opposed him manfully; but Cæsar, raising

his voice, threatened to put him to death. 'And, young man,' said he, 'you are not ignorant that this is so much harder for me to say than to do.' Metellus, afraid at last, retired, and 'ever after,' Plutarch tells us, 'Cæsar was easily and readily supplied with everything necessary.'

After the Temples of Vesta and Saturn, the most ancient shrine in the Forum is that of the Dioscuri that stands beside the Fountain of the Dioscuri close to the House of the Vestal Virgins. Founded about 484 B.C. in honour of the great twin brethren who had led Rome to that victory over the Latins at the battle of Lake Regillus, it was built beside the Lacus Juturnæ where, after the fight, those heroes, Castor and Pollux, as was believed, riding into Rome, watered their horses. So here in the Vicus Tuscus, close to the most sacred Temple of the Hearth, their shrine was built beside a spring of water. The ruins we see, the three beautiful columns of Parian marble, date, however, from the time of Augustus, when this temple which had suffered very grievously in the civil wars was rebuilt. It was indeed part of the policy of Augustus to establish the Gods more firmly and more splendidly in the remembrance of the people. The shrine of the Dioscuri was not the only temple he rebuilt, before he established as the crown alike of his arms and his diplomacy, the Temple of Concord—*Templum Concordiæ Augustæ*—on the site of the ancient shrine which, built in B.C. 366, commemorated the peace between the Patricians and the Plebs. The Golden Age seemed for a moment to have come back again.

Such other temples as there are about the Forum are foundations of the Empire:—the Temple of Vespasian beside the Temple of Concord, built by Domitian and restored by Septimius Severus; the Temple of Antoninus and Faustina, with its ten beautiful columns above the Sacred Way, dedicated by Antoninus to his dead wife the elder Faustina, in which to-day stands the Church of S. Lorenzo in Miranda; the Temple of Romulus, built by the Emperor Maxentius to the memory of his son; the Temple of the Urbs Sacra, built by Vespasian, in the midst of which to-day rises the Church of SS. Cosma and Damiano; the Temple of Venus and Rome at the end of the Forum towards the Colosseum, in the Sacred Way, which Hadrian built from his own plan in A.D. 135 and which Maxentius restored in 307. Just there we come upon what must have been one of the most splendid buildings in Rome, indeed two temples in one, set back to back, as it were, and facing, the one towards the Colosseum, the other towards the Capitol. It possessed, we read, more than two hundred columns of precious marbles; the colonnade surrounding it was one hundred and eighty yards long and one hundred and ten yards wide, consisting of one hundred and fifty columns. And there Venus was worshipped as the Mother of Rome.

There were other temples too—the *Templum Divi Julii*, of the Divine Julius for instance, of which nothing or almost nothing now remains, yet the Forum was not only the religious centre of the City, but the political centre also. And in spite of the changes and havoc of centuries, it is there, best of all, we may still

reconstruct for ourselves, as it were, that ancient political life which the very form and shape of the Forum serves to endorse.

At the foot of the Capitol under the citadel to the north, a series of terraces rose one above another from this valley in which the Plebs were used to assemble; and there the Rostra were built. Above, on the first terrace stood the Comitium where the Patricians gathered, really little more than a square vestibule of the Curia,<sup>1</sup> which stood on the terrace above, where the Senate most often met. In the time of the Republic the Comitium must have stood, as it seems, before the Lapis Niger, that mysterious black stone which has been thought to close the tomb of Romulus.

Thus the Curia and the Comitium rising over the tomb of the Founder of the City dominated it, the symbol and sign, as it were, of that aristocratic government which conserved the national spirit and traditions, and, in Rome not less than in England, built up with infinite persistence and wisdom the greatness of the State.

That part of the plain which lies immediately under the Comitium was the Forum proper, and there the Plebs assembled before the Rostra, which standing as they did almost under the Comitium at the head of the Forum, enabled both Patricians and Plebs to hear the orators. The centuries of struggle between them seem to pass there to-day almost before our eyes.

But the Rostra, as we now see them, are not in their original place, which was nearer to the Comitium;

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Livy, xlv. 24.

for since the orator spoke in the open air, it was necessary, if all were to hear him, that the space should be small between the Comitium filled with Patricians and the Rostra about which the Plebs were gathered. No doubt among a southern people, gesture, that marvellous language of gesture, which we may see to-day in any village in Sicily, counted for much, while the many temples and buildings crowded round about in what after all is a narrow space helped to make the harangue audible. And yet one might think that amid the howls of the Plebs, the noise of a fight, the continual inarticulate interruptions, it must often have been difficult for any one speaking there to be perfectly heard in the Comitium.

And then in the general collapse of aristocratic government that helped Cæsar to his mastery and that he encouraged by every means at his disposal, we find that he did not hesitate to remove the Rostra yet further from the Comitium so that the Plebs were flattered and the Patricians in some sort divorced from public life. It was but one sign more that the strong and free government which had made Rome so great was at an end for ever.

The Rostra, as we see them to-day, are but a fragment: yet that fragment may well have heard some of the noblest and some of the most brutal words that have been uttered in the world. It was there that the oration of Cicero against Antony—the *Philippics*—was pronounced, and there the head of the great orator and patriot was exposed after his unspeakable murder by the assassins of the Triumvirate. The old man had fled to his villa at Formiæ, but was overtaken on the way as he was borne along in his litter.



With the courage which had always distinguished him he put his head out between the curtains and bade his murderers strike. They needed no second invitation. He died in B.C. 43 in his sixty-third year.

It was under Trajan that the Rostra of Julius Cæsar were restored, the two balustrades which are to-day among the best preserved fragments in the Forum being added at that time. There we see Italy, just a mother, bringing a child to the Emperor who on the left proclaims his edict from the Rostra, establishing thus the famous institution for poor children. In the background are a Triumphal Arch, the Basilica Aemilia, the Sacred Fig-tree and the statue of Marsyas which stood near the Temple of the Dioscuri. It was possibly this relief which induced Pope Gregory to pray for the soul of the dead Emperor, till he was assured of his salvation.<sup>1</sup>

The other relief represents again the clemency of Trajan who is burning the records of certain taxes. In the background are the buildings on the western side of the Forum: the Temple of Saturn, the Temple of Concord, the Basilica Julia, and once more the Marsyas and the Fig-tree. On the inner side of the balustrades which have been wrongly set up, for what is now the inner was of old the outer side, we see carved in relief the victims at the public celebrations of the Suovetaurilia, when a boar, a ram and a bull were sacrificed. How different is this hard and realistic Roman art from the work of the Greeks in the frieze of the Parthenon! There, with a perfect feeling for animals, Pheidias has carved the bull led

<sup>1</sup> See p. 86, *et seq.*

to sacrifice, the victim of the Gods, amid the chanting of the priests, the songs of the people ; but the Roman artist seems to have understood nothing and to have seen after all only with his bodily eyes. It is before such work as this that we seem to realise almost for the first time the limitations of Rome, the immense gulf that—yes, we must admit it at last—separates us from her. Her artists lacked a certain delicacy and clairvoyance and were without spirituality or finesse. They seem, here at least, to have been mere copyists of Nature without insight or sensibility. We seem to understand at last, before such work as this, how even Aurelius could sit through all the brutality of the amphitheatre, and drag, even he, in his Triumph, along the Sacred Way that little German family, the father and mother in chains, their child crying in her arms, on the threshold of a home brought bodily over the mountains ‘to make a Roman holiday,’ for the enjoyment of the Roman people. Yes, that explains too, the failure of Rome, not in art only, but in life, in government. To the heart which would refuse to look on just that with indifference—that and the rest—the future belonged. Yet we may well ask ourselves, if only to avoid a kind of vulgar self-complacency, what latent cruelty we still entertain—that European or American crowd for instance—which in certain circumstances might induce us to do the like, or at least to find excuses, reasonable and comforting for an indifference, there certainly, not less criminal than action itself. And remembering the brutalities of the modern world we shall do well not to flatter ourselves before the Romans.

The Forum which we have seen thus, cursorily enough, as the centre of the religious and political life of the City, was not less, it seems, the centre of justice also. For there, beside the temples and the Rostra, stood the Basilicas, the law courts. Those great rectangular buildings, divided into three aisles by two lines of columns and ending in a semicircular apse, were open on all sides, and were indeed like great arcades beside the way, so that the law was literally administered in public. Later, however, they were walled in and became the model for the first great Christian Churches.

The earliest of these buildings was the Basilica Porcia, named after the famous M. Porcius Cato, Censorius, who built it in B.C. 184, probably on the model of the Stoa Basileios at Athens. This building stood to the west of the Curia, where is now the Church of SS. Martina and Luca.

Then to the right of the Curia in 179 B.C. the Censors Aemilius Lepidus and M. Fulvius Nobilior built the Basilica Aemilia which was so often restored by the Aemilian House, for the last time in the reign of Tiberius. Ten years after this foundation, the Basilica Sempronia was founded in 169 B.C.

Later Julius Cæsar built the Basilica that still bears his name to the south of the Forum beside the Temple of Saturn. This was scarcely finished when it was burned to the ground. Augustus, however, rebuilt it and added to it. Only the foundations remain to-day.

It is, however, in the Basilica of Constantine at the far end of the Forum towards the Colosseum that we have the most perfect ancient example of what we

understand by a Basilica. Begun by Maxentius and only finished by Constantine whose name it bears, it consisted of three aisles ending in three apses, covered by a vast vaulting as wide as that of S. Pietro in Vaticano. It was 300 feet long and 270 feet wide and 114 feet high. Before it stood eighty mighty Corinthian columns of white marble, only one of which has come down to us ; but it stands to-day before the Church of S. Maria Maggiore where Paul v. set it up in 1613. The entrance which faced the Sacred Way was once upheld by columns of red porphyry, some of the broken shafts of which have been re-erected. They but add to the bizarre splendour of those enormous ruins which seem to me more impressive, more likely to touch the imagination, than the Colosseum itself. And this splendid ruin is indeed the herald not of the end, but of that tremendous change which turned the Roman into the Christian world. It was built between two disasters ; founded by an Emperor about to be defeated, it was finished by him who deserted Rome.

There is one splendour in the Forum which might seem to sum up, as it were, the whole significance of the place, I mean the Triumphal Arches. Of these there were certainly four, but nothing, or almost nothing, remains of those built to Augustus and Tiberius. Of the two which are left to us the Arch of Titus is the earlier. Set up in his honour by the Senate, to commemorate the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, it was finished as that inscription proves—S.P.Q.R. DIVO TITO DIVI VESPASIANI FILIO VESPASIANO AUGVSTO—under Domitian his successor, the last of the twelve Cæsars. It stands

not far from the Temple of Venus and Rome at the highest point of the Sacred Way across which it was built. Consisting of a single arch supported by composite pillars, it is decorated with fine reliefs. In the *tympana* are set winged Victories bearing palms and crowns, while beneath the inscription is carved a sacrificial procession as a frieze. Within, under the arch, are two marble reliefs in which we see Titus crowned by Victory proceeding along the Sacred Way to the Capitol in a chariot driven by Roma. Opposite is another relief of a Triumphal procession with the captives and the spoils : the table with the shewbread, and the seven-branched candlestick from the Temple at Jerusalem ; while in the vault the divine Emperor is borne to heaven by the bird of Jove. Carved some twenty years before the balustrades of the Rostra, these reliefs have much of their character and as little feeling or sense of beauty as they. The work of those who were always the victors, they celebrate a strength and persistence which have suffered neither a love of beauty nor a love of truth to cheat them of reality. It is as though we saw an indomitable tyranny, already a little weary of itself marching once more, how uselessly, over the humble and meek. Rome was already incapable of any sort of expression save that of government. For her, life no longer had illusions or promises ; one not only died at the word of command, one lived by it also.

It was nearly a hundred and fifty years later that the Arch of Septimius Severus, at the other end of the Forum within the shadow of the Capitol, was erected by the Senate, in honour of that Emperor and his sons, Caracalla and Geta, to commemorate their victories

over the Parthians in the year 203 A.D. Of old it was crowned by a bronze chariot drawn by six horses, in which the Emperor stood crowned by Victory. Four disengaged columns adorn the façade ; they add to the architectural beauty of the monument a certain charm, and it might seem that without them the Arch would be too dull and too heavy. But victory has here already destroyed the victors. All the ruins of Rome seem to cry *Vae Victis*, as though there were but one thing more disastrous than defeat and that should be victory. And if the reliefs of the Arch of Titus carved in the year 81 A.D. move us little, what can we say of those a hundred and fifty years later ? They are scarcely art at all, but a sort of craftsmanship, a true cemetery decoration.

Not far from the Forum, towards the Colosseum, at the foot of the Coelian Hill, stands another Triumphal Arch, better preserved than either of those in the Forum, built in 312 A.D. to celebrate the victory of Constantine over Maxentius. The decadence of insatiable victory has proceeded how far in less than a hundred years. For here, as we see in a moment, the architecture is grandiose and exaggerated, and in every way inferior to that of the arch of Septimius Severus. As for sculpture, it was apparently no longer practised, for the work here has been stolen from a building of Trajan, though not apparently from his Triumphal Arch. Some of it is very beautiful, especially the reliefs : Trajan's Triumph ; the Battle with Dacians ; the Prisoners beseeching Mercy, where we see a Dacian village in the background ; and the medallions of Hunting, and the Sacrificial Scenes : but we must think of it as work of the second century, and

not as sculpture of the time of Constantine. If we wish to judge of what his age was capable, we must confine our attention to the small reliefs beneath the Medallions and to the statues of Victories and Captives on the pedestals of the columns.

The inscription is interesting: IMP. CAES. FL. CONSTANTINO MAXIMO PIO FELICI AUGUSTO S.P.Q.R. QUOD INSTINCTU DIVINITATIS MENTIS. . . . ' *To the Emperor Cæsar Flavius Constantine . . . who by the inspiration of Divinity has freed the Republic from Tyranny. . . .*' One may well ask who was this Divinity? Was it the Prince of Life or Jupiter Capitolinus? Who was the God of Constantine the Apostate? It would be hard to say. Beside that arch we seem to stand on the threshold of a new world, in the twilight of the Gods.

But to-day, as I walk through the Forum among the flowers, it is not after all of any divinity, pagan or Christian, that I think, but of the mortal life of man, eternally the same, whether in the time of Jupiter or under the gentle dominion of Gesù Cristo. It was but seldom, after all, that the victor was accorded a Triumph, that Cæsar after Cæsar was acclaimed by the Senate and the populace; but our brothers passed by all day long. And it is of those things which continually befall us all in such a place that one of them—not the least beloved—has told us in verse, how much more lasting than the temples of his Gods!

I have said that the Forum was the true Piazza of Rome, the public promenade, and it is as just that Horace shows it to us, as no one else perhaps could do, as no one else has done, certainly.

‘I happened to be walking,’ he tells us, ‘along the Via Sacra as is my custom—*Ibam forte Via Sacra sicut meus est mos*—I was thinking of some trifle or another, was indeed quite lost in it, when a man ran up to me whom I only knew by name, and seizing my hand, said he, “How do you do, my dearest friend?”

““Pretty well,” said I, “as times go, and am quite at your service.” As he kept sticking close to me I anticipated him by saying, “Have you any further commands?”

‘But he answered: “You must know me. I am a scholar.”

‘Then said I: “On that account I shall esteem you more.”

‘In truth I was wretchedly anxious to get away from him; so at one moment I quickened my pace, at another I came to a standstill, I whispered in my servant’s ear, whilst the sweat trickled down to my very ankles. “O Bolanus!” said I to myself, “how I envy you your hot temper.”

‘Meanwhile he went on chattering about anything, praising the streets, the city. As I did not answer him a word he said: “You are dying to get away, I have seen it from the first; but it’s no good, I shall stick to you and accompany you all the way you are going.”

‘Then said I: “There is no need for you to take so long a round. I want to visit some one you do not know; . . . it is across the Tiber . . . a long way off and . . . he is ill in bed . . . it is near Cæsar’s gardens.”

““I have nothing particular to do,” said he, “and I am a good walker. I will go with you all the way.”



‘Down went my ears like those of a sulky donkey when it feels the weight too heavy for its back. Then he began :

“ ‘Unless I deceive myself, you would not esteem Viscus or Varius as friends more than me ; for who is a better or readier poet than I am ? Who can dance with more grace than I ? Hermogenes himself might envy my singing.’ ”

‘Here it seemed to me was an opportunity for putting in a word. “Is your mother alive ?” said I. “Have you any relations to whom your life and health are important ?”

“ ‘No,” said he, “no, I have no one ; *I have laid them all to rest.*”

“ ‘Happy people !” said I. “Now I am left ; so despatch me at once ; for my sad fate is now at hand predicted to me when I was a boy by an old Sabine woman after she had shaken her consulting urn : ‘This boy,’ said she, ‘neither poison, nor the sword of an enemy, nor pleurisy, nor cold, nor gout will destroy, but one day a chatterbox will end his life, wherefore let him avoid all great talkers as soon as he grows to be a man.’ ”

‘We had now come to the Temple of Vesta, and a fourth part of the day was gone, and as it happened he was bound to appear in court to answer to one to whom he had given bail. If he failed to appear he lost his case.

“ ‘If you love me,” said he, “give me your aid in court.”

“ ‘May I perish,” said I, “if I can appear before a Prætor or know anything of common law, besides, I am in a hurry to get you know where.”

“ “ I am doubtful,” said he, “ what to do—to leave you or my case.”

“ “ Me, I pray,” said I.

“ “ No, I won’t,” said he. So he went on before, and I—for it is hard to contend with one’s conqueror—even followed. Then he began again.

“ “ On what terms are you with Mæcenas ? He is careful in his friendship and a man of sense—no one ever made a more adroit use of his fortune. You would have a powerful backer in me, one able to play the second part—if you would but introduce me. May I utterly perish, if you would not make a clear stage for yourself.”

“ I answered : “ We do not live on the terms that you imagine. There is not a house more honest than that, or more free from intrigues. It never annoys me if another richer or more learned than I is there. Each has his own position.”

“ “ What you tell me,” said he, “ is wonderful, almost incredible.”

“ “ But,” said I, “ it is the truth.”

“ “ Well,” said he, “ you increase my desire for his intimacy.”

“ “ You have only to wish for it,” I answered, “ such is your virtue you will take him by storm ; he is one that may be won, and this is the reason why he is so hard to approach at first.”

“ “ I will not be wanting to myself,” said he. “ I will bribe the servants. If the door be shut in my face to-day, I will not give in ; I will watch my chance. I will meet him at the corners of the streets. I will attend him to his home. Nothing is gained in this life but by toil.”

‘ While he was thus busy Fuscus Aristius came towards us—a dear friend of mine, who knew the man right well. We stopped, we exchanged salutations. I began to pull and pinch his arms, but they might have been dead. I nodded and winked to him to deliver me. The wretch laughed, pretending not to know what I meant. I began to get angry. “ Surely,” said I, “ you said you had some private matter to speak to me about.”

“ “ Yes,” said he, “ yes, I remember well, but I will talk to you of it at a more convenient time. To-day is the thirtieth Sabbath; you would not surely scandalise the circumcised Jews ? ”

“ “ Oh,” said I, “ I have no such scruples ! ”

“ “ But I have,” said he. “ I am one of the weaker brethren—one of the many, so pardon me. I will speak to you another time.”

“ “ Alas ! ” said I, “ Oh, this day, how black it has risen for me ! ”

‘ Off he went, leaving me like a victim with the knife at my throat. But by chance the plaintiff meets my man face to face, and in a loud voice shouts to him, “ Whither, thou basest of men ? ” then to me, “ May I make you a witness ? ” I gave my ear to be touched. He hurried my man off to the trial. . . .

‘ So I was saved, by Apollo.’

Just there that strenuous and eager world about to become so disastrous is figured for us, not in any of those great and noble personages who have raised one upon another in stone or marble the temples and law courts we see, but, best of all, perhaps, in that unimpassioned poet, who was really so indifferent, so

rarely, so fortunately a man of the world. We see him often in those poems of his, really a sort of autobiography, as the envied friend of Mæcenas, the companion of Virgil, the so human lover of Pyrrha, joyful too, as a townsman always is in the country, at his Sabine farm—*Satis beatus unicis Sabinis*. But it is something lighter, more elegant and superficial than even those slight and perfect odes, more human too, where all are so full of humanity, that figures the age for us and brings it home to us, as we say, in a casual experience that might have happened to any of us—yes, here in London. For in him the ages are all equal, and we, too, are of his company.

#### IV

#### THE PALATINE HILL

TO leave the Forum for the Palatine Hill is to pass, not so much from the period of the Republic to that of the Empire, for the Forum itself is full of Imperial buildings, as from the Rome of the people to the Rome of the Emperors. And yet, though it is impossible to think of anything amid these ruins but the tragedy of the Cæsars, the splendour and havoc of imperial Rome, it was here after all, on what is still the most mysterious and the most beautiful of the Roman hills, that Evander welcomed Æneas, not with any great magnificence though he was a king, but modestly withal, in honourable poverty, giving him a bed of leaves and the hide of a Libyan bear for pillow :

Dixit et angusti subter fastigia tecti  
ingentem Ænean duxit, stratisque locavit  
effultum foliis et pelle Libystidis ursae.

*Æneid*, viii. 366.

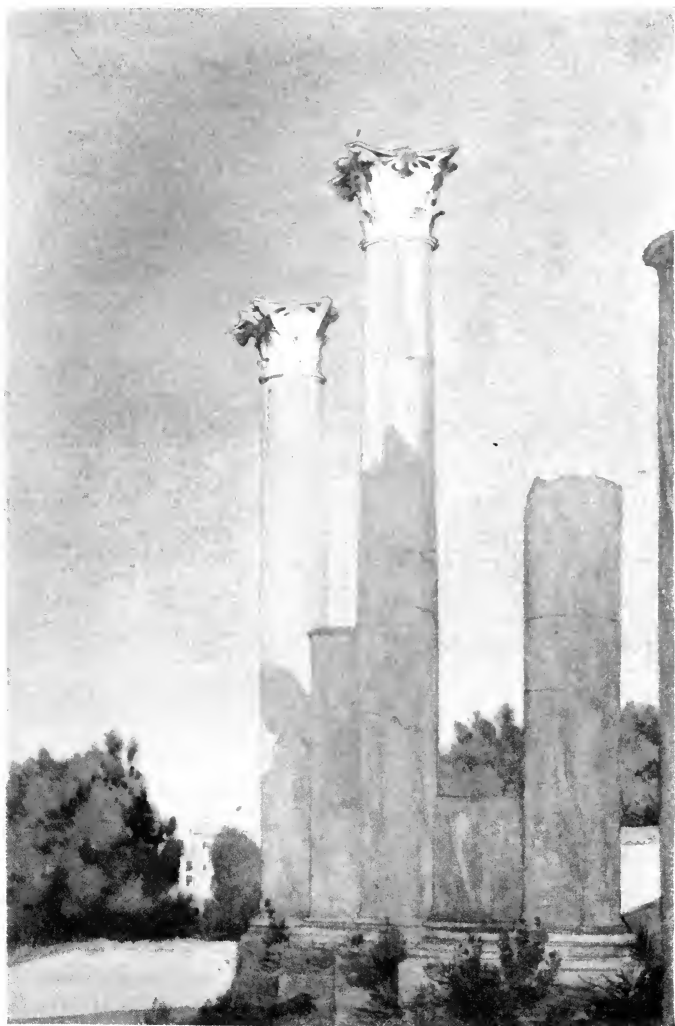
And indeed this Hill, just a vast ruin now, was not only the leafy cradle of Rome, but for long the very City herself. Here Romulus, calling about him all his comrades, according to the Etruscan rites yoked the oxen together to the plough and drove them round the Hill, tracing the line of the walls with the plough-share, lifting it wherever the gates were to be set.

The furrow thus traced was the sacred girdle of the City, which might never be broken, within which none might introduce the dead or the gods of strangers.

So *Roma Quadrata*—foursquare Rome—was founded according to the shape of the Hill on which it stood, an image as it were of an ideal *Templum* as the Augurs had decreed.

The story of Romulus and Remus, a mere legend, as the Germans have so often and so brutally insisted, thus becomes at least true as a parable; and then, as though to confirm us in our amused contempt of 'history as a science,' as though a thing so concerned with humanity could be anything but an art, that legend has suddenly been proved to be, well, the mere truth, by the irrefutable witness of the earth, those stones and tufa walls which have so lately been found beneath the Palaces of the Cæsars; the foundations even of the great gate *Porta Mugonia* having been laid bare, where Romulus first lifted the ploughshare, and whence at dawn his oxen went forth to pasture in the meadows of the Forum. Nor, it seems, is this all. For to the right of the Gate stands a huge pile of stones, in which one may almost certainly recognise the foundations of a temple—the Temple of Jupiter Stator, which, as Livy tells us,<sup>1</sup> Romulus built in honour of Jove, who had inspired him to build the City, later giving him victory, after defeat at the hands of the Sabines. Close by, in that grove of ilex on the western height of the Hill, is the Temple of the *Magna Mater*, founded in 191 B.C., which came almost untouched through the worst years of the Empire.

<sup>1</sup> Livy, lib. i. cap. 2. See also Ovid, *Trist.* III. i.



RUINS ON THE PALATINE





So we see the Palatine, later the grave of the Empire, its Palaces crushed under the too great weight of the world, as the cradle of Rome, the home of its founder, the throne of its first kings. And so it became the hill of the Patricians; through all the years of the Republic it was there they preferred to dwell, till, with the advent of the Emperors, they were expelled. Catullus, we read, made his home there, and there the orator Hortensius lived, whose house Augustus bought later. There, too, lived Cicero beside his victim Catiline, his rival Clodius and his assassin Antony. If, among its famous inhabitants, we do not find the name of Julius Cæsar, it is because for a political end he preferred to live among the Plebs in the Suburra until as Pontifex Maximus he went into residence at the Regia. This fact in itself goes to prove how patrician the quarter of the Palatine had always been. Augustus was born there, and, while still Triumvir, went to live in the house there he had bought from Hortensius and enlarged, but which still remained merely a private mansion. Nor did he much increase it after he became Emperor. The simplicity of his life was one of his weapons; and indeed the display and luxury that came later would have been repugnant to the severity of his taste. It was not till the accession of Tiberius that the Palatine Hill came into the hands of the Emperor.

It is Suetonius who has left us a description of the house of Augustus. 'It was remarkable,' he says, 'neither for size nor splendour. The porticoes were but small and were sustained, too, by pillars of the common stone of the Alban Hills. In the rooms

there was neither marble nor mosaic. During all the forty years he lived there, he occupied the same apartment in summer as in winter. . . . He wore, you must know, only such clothes as his sister or his wife or his daughter made for him. He ate but little, and that consisted of a coarse bread with cheese, fish, or green figs. He drank very little wine. . . .'

The Domus Augustiana stood on the south side of the Hill looking over the Circus Maximus. The ruins we now see belong for the most part to the time of Domitian who built there; the remains of the original house are merely state apartments, the private rooms of Augustus lying still beneath the Villa Mills.

We may, however, understand something of the simplicity which surrounded the Emperor if we explore the dower-house of his wife Livia. The Domus Liviae is the only building of the kind that remains on the Palatine. Descending by a flight of steps to the level of the Hill in early imperial times, one finds oneself in the *Vestibulum* paved with mosaic, whence one enters the *Atrium*, a quadrangular court, once partly covered, out of which three tiny rooms open whose only luxury is the frescoes which even yet may be traced on the walls. In those paintings, once so fine, you see certain classic tales, Io guarded by Argus about to be released by Mercury, Polyphemus and Galatea and two small sacrificial scenes that might pass almost for easel pictures or rather veritable triptychs.

Another room is decorated with frescoes of fruits and masks and flowers; while still another is simply painted in panels, over which are set certain winged

figures on a white ground. But what has struck you chiefly after all is the smallness of everything, a smallness that would make any great ceremony impossible.

Beyond the white room is the *Triclinium*, the dining-room, painted in panels of clear crimson, and decorated with two frescoes of landscapes and certain vases and fruits. How light and delicate is this work which gives to so small a place a certain airiness and grace! It seems to prove certainly the good taste of that time which allowed nothing heavy or sombre or even too serious to hang there always on the walls. It is as though these people had preferred the delicate landscapes and etchings of Whistler for instance, to live with at least, before the 'Mona Lisa' of Da Vinci, or the sombre canvases of Rembrandt, the too eager and insistent work of Velasquez.

Here, doubtless, Livia passed the years of her widowhood devoted, as we know, rather to the memory of Augustus, to marry whom she had, as we remind ourselves, divorced her first husband, than to the cause of her son Tiberius of whom she was so unaccountably jealous.

The policy of Augustus had combined a personal simplicity, that was certainly not ingenuous, with a public display that whatever its object, finding Rome of brick, as he said, left it a city of marble. Among the many monuments that he had thus given the Romans in exchange for their liberty, not the least splendid was the temple he built, on the Eastern height of the Palatine towards the Arch of Constantine, to Apollo, Actian Apollo, as Virgil calls him, who, as was thought, had interfered on his behalf at the battle

of Actium;<sup>1</sup> and this was his reward. If his own house contained 'neither marble nor mosaic' it was not so he built this temple which, surrounded by a magnificent portico, with a library on either side, was upheld by pillars of marble, walled with jasper and ivory, paved with porphyry and crowded with statues, among them the finest works of the Greeks.<sup>2</sup> It reconciles us with its utter destruction to know that in the midst of that temple to Apollo there stands to-day a church dedicated to S. Sebastian : so unforgetful is our loyalty.

The tradition of Augustus, that simplicity on which he had so prided himself, lingered on into the reign of his stepson Tiberius, who, however, found the Domus Augustiana too strait for him. The palace he built, the Domus Tiberiana, stood to the north of the Palatine above the Clivus Victoriae. Covered as it still is with gardens and a great grove of cypresses—and may it be long before they are destroyed to disclose after all another brickfield!—certainly, the ruins we may now see are not of much interest ; and in fact Tiberius lived there but little. Really a great soldier, the better part of his life had been spent in the field, and when at last in A.D. 14, already fifty-six years old, he succeeded to Augustus, the passionate indiscretions of youth must have been almost forgotten. And then he had long been used to an absolute or nearly absolute command in the Provinces, which he seems never to have forgotten or ceased to think of really with affection.

<sup>1</sup> *Æneid.* viii. 704.

<sup>2</sup> Propertius, *El.* ii. 31 ; Ovid, *Trist.*, III. i. 59-61 ; Horace, *Ep.* i. 3-16.

Suetonius, often a gossip, and sometimes we may suspect a malicious one, tells us that the first eight years of Tiberius' reign were marked by a just government and personal frugality. And though the following six years were less happy—more than a hundred persons suffering death on suspicion of conspiracy—it was not till he was sixty-eight that he suddenly left Rome, going first into Campania, then the garden of Italy, and later to Capri, as we are asked to believe, to indulge himself in the most brutal sensuality. It might seem that however unwise it was to leave Rome in the power of Sejanus, the tragedies that had befallen his house, the murder of Agrippa Postumus, the mysterious death of Germanicus in the East, the poisoning of his son Drusus, the exile of Agrippina, were sufficient to excuse a disgust of that world of sycophants and traitors which always surrounded the imperial throne ; so that Tiberius may well have fled away to the meadows of Campania, the sea of Capri, rather in weariness than in love of a world in which, soldier as he was, he must ever have been something of a stranger. Certainly the almost insane gloom which descended upon him in his last years when he had struck down Sejanus for dreaming of the purple, and put a worse monster in his place, suggests a certain despair of the world which may well have crept into his heart in that city of little men. The crimes of Macro seem neither to have surprised him nor to have moved him, for he had fallen into a kind of lethargy, such as often comes to those who, having spent all their lives in the field, or on the sea, or among the mountains, are suddenly caught, in old age perhaps, between the walls

of a city, so that he scarcely resisted those who came to suffocate him at the order of Macro in March A.D. 37.

Tiberius might well have despaired of the future of the world had he known the true character of his successor, that Caius Cæsar, the son of Germanicus and Agrippina, whom the army called Caligula. It is to him we owe the enormous and picturesque ruins facing the Capitol which are all that is left of the magnificent additions he made to the Domus Tiberiana. Always lavishly generous, he lived the life of a mad egotist, from the first indulging himself in every far-fetched vice, both of soul and body, which he could contrive or hear of. Weakened by his vast excesses his mind seems to have tottered under the weight of that dream which was the Empire. Dizzy with the thought of his own eminence he conceived of himself as a God, ordained his own worship in Rome, and in an insane hour decreed that his horse should be both priest and Consul.

The enormous palace, whose foundations might seem to be the work of Titans, which to-day astonishes us beyond anything else on the Palatine Hill, was the scene of his madness and his death. The conspiracy, as it seems, was conceived almost on the spur of the moment by Cassius Chærea, Tribune of a Prætorian Cohort. It was, doubtless, but one among countless plots that had failed to rid that cynical Roman world of a tyrant of whom it was weary at last. On January 24th, A.D. 41, the Emperor had presided at the Games all the morning, and at midday, wishing to return to his palace, he had taken the secret way, leaving his German guard to follow the road. Almost alone he

entered the Cryptoporticus, that underground gallery, a great part of which has been excavated, which led from palace to palace about the Hill. There the conspirators, as is supposed, awaited him. It was Chærea himself who struck him down, ridding the world of a monster terrible as a universal disease. His wife and his daughter were also put to death.

It is not, however, of Caligula alone that we think as we follow to-day the windings of that subterranean path among the foundations of the Domus Tiberiana. By this way, too, came Messalina, the wife of the pedantic Claudius, on her way to the brothels of the Suburra. Like a scarlet shadow, even yet she seems to pass along this labyrinth at sunset, a pallid tongue of fire trembling with inscrutable desires.

Nero, the successor of Claudius, has left no mark at all on the Palatine. That formidable pupil of Seneca doubtless found no room there for the gardens he built at last at the foot of the Coelian Hill, nor for that Golden House which he contrived on the Esquiline—beautiful things, doubtless, that were so soon swept away.

The election of Vespasian, however, showed how weary Rome had at last become of the excesses of Caligula and Nero. The Flavian House came at last, in the person of Domitian, to build much on the Palatine, but both Vespasian and his more cultured son Titus, the conqueror of the Jews, imitated the simplicity of Augustus, only building, lavishly as he had done, those public monuments, Baths, Amphitheatres and Basilicas, which dazzled the people of his time not less than they astonish us to-day. Their greatest monument was the Colosseum, which

Vespasian began on the site of the ruined gardens of Nero, and which Titus finished in A.D. 80.

Hic ubi conspicui venerabilis amphitheatri  
Erigitur moles, stagna Neronis erant. . . .  
Reddita Roma sibi est ; et sunt te praeside, Cæsar,  
Deliciae populi, quae fuerant domini.

Mart. *De Spec.*, Ep. ii. 5.

In truth, as Martial sang, Rome had become herself again, and, thanks to Cæsar, that which had served as the pleasure of one man was now offered for the enjoyment of all.

On the Palatine, however, it is the name of Domitian we remember before that of his father Vespasian or his brother Titus. He alone of the Flavian House seems to have been touched with the madness of Caligula. He, too, proclaimed himself to be divine ; and the Terror that reigned in Rome under his predecessors befell again in his own latter years. He was unfortunate and unhappy. All his campaigns came to nothing, and both Tacitus and Juvenal have told us in words that cannot die of his misery and his shame. Yet it is rather of his splendour we think when to-day we look upon the ruins of the Stadium or the *débris* of that Palace which he built to outshine every other, even, according to the verses of Statius, 'losing itself in its loftiness, among the stars, rising above the clouds in the full splendour of the sun, exciting the jealousy of Jove Himself.'

Standing, as it does, on the most splendid site on the Palatine, overlooking the Forum and the Via Sacra on one side and the Circus Maximus on the other, the grandeur of its proportions alone might excuse the



name the poets of the time bestowed upon it—the sanctuary of the Emperor—for certainly no temple was more splendid. On the east, towards the Forum, it was approached by a magnificent portico or vestibule, which stretched across the entire façade. Entering by the great doorway one came into the *Tablinum*, the *Aula Regia*—the Throne Room, as we should say. Here the Emperor gave audience. Spanned by one tremendous arch, the Hall was lighted from above, and its walls, lined with statues, were panelled with precious marbles. To the left of the *Tablinum* one entered the *Lararium*, the private Chapel, where stood a statue of Minerva, whom Domitian looked upon as his especial patroness. To the right of the Throne Room one entered the *Basilica*, the Hall of Justice in which S. Lorenzo was condemned. Behind the *Tablinum* and entered from it was the great central court of the palace, the *Peristylum*, which was open to the sky but surrounded on all sides by an arcade, so that it was a veritable cloister. Beyond this one came into the *Triclinium* or Banqueting Hall, a marvellous chamber encrusted with wonderful marbles and paved with *opus sectile*. On either side opened the *Nymphæa*—withdrawing rooms, each with a fountain adorned with statues of marble and bronze.

Dion tells us very graphically of one of those strange orgies which must often have taken place here in the time of Domitian; but the one he describes is rather horrible than voluptuous.

‘Domitian,’ he says, ‘once made a great feast for the citizens, proposing to finish it with a fine entertainment to a few of the highest nobility. To this end he caused an apartment to be decorated in com-

plete mourning. The ceiling was black, the walls were black, the pavement was black, and the stone seats for the guests were black also. They were introduced at night, alone, and at the head of each couch was placed a column like a tombstone, on which the name of the guest who sat there was graven, while above was hung a little lamp such as is hung in tombs. By and by there entered troops of naked boys, blackened, and these danced with horrid movements, and then, halting each before a guest, offered him such fragments of food as are commonly presented to the dead. Paralysed with fear, expecting each moment to be put to death, they sat in absolute silence, not knowing whether their neighbour was yet alive, while the Emperor spoke of those things which only pertain to the state of the departed.' This, however, proved to be but a bad jest. Presently, with a laugh, Domitian sent them off, not indeed quite reassured, for they still expected the worst, but yet safe and sound; presenting to each the silver cup and platter in which the strange supper had been served and, along with these, the slave who had served it.

It was in this palace, where he had so often practised on the fear of others, that he himself faced the dagger of the assassin, and fell, slain like a beast by the knife of a slave. The victim of every sort of superstition, he dreamed that Minerva, his guardian, had withdrawn her protection from him at the bidding of Jove, the guardian of the Empire. This might seem likely enough. It was even said that he had knowledge of the very day he should die and of the sword which should kill him. Extraordinary precautions were taken; no one was allowed to approach him save



CYPRESSES ON THE PALATINE



after a rigorous search, and the corridor where he walked was by his own order lined with a marvellously polished marble, so that it might reflect the image of any one approaching silently from behind. With a fatuous lunacy, worthy alone of Caligula, he suddenly exclaimed one day as he walked there: 'Something is about to happen which men will talk of all the world over.' Then drawing a drop of blood from a pimple on his forehead: 'May this be all!' said he. But he was right; 'all the world over' men had had enough of this madman. Not long after, as he walked in his mirrored corridor, some slave, we know not by whose order, struck him in the belly with a knife. The Emperor staggered and tried to draw his weapon, but some one had already plucked it away. Clutching at the knife of his assassin, which cut his fingers to the bone, in a last desperate attempt to save himself he 'thrust his bloody talons into the eyes of his assailant, beat his head with a golden goblet, shrieking for help.' Then Parthenius Maximus and others rushed in and killed him as he lay on the pavement.

Not much more than a hundred years lie between the murder of Julius Cæsar and the murder of Domitian, yet almost all the great buildings on the Palatine whose ruins we now see were contrived and established within that time. In the century which followed, comprising the reigns of Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius, nothing, or almost nothing, was added to the palaces that had made of this Hill the most splendid throne in the world and, one might almost say, the only one. Indeed, there was room for nothing more. Septimius Severus, however, that

African under whom the Empire tottered into dotage—he stands almost midway between Julius Cæsar and the end of the Empire of the west (476 A.D.)—did not think so. He proposed to outshine all his predecessors, and when he found that there was no space sufficient for his dream on the Palatine itself, he built, as it were, a hill of brick beside it, in the valley towards the Cœlian Hill, rearing his enormous palace on high beside the Stadium on the tremendous foundations and substructures we see to-day ; while he built too the Septizonium with its many stories to improve the view from the Appian Way, which, as it seems, ended there.

With Septimius Severus the history of the buildings on the Palatine may be said to come to an end ; but the Hill itself, its palaces and ruins remained at least the theoretic seat of government for more than a thousand years. We see them pass, these pale ghosts of buried Cæsar, who through all the Middle Age tried to save or pillage the Eternal City : Goths and Vandals who came half in wonder to spoil the glory of the world ; Odoacer and the great Theodoric, the Greek Officials, the Dux of Rome, the Exarch of Ravenna, the great Autocrator, Charlemagne, King of the Franks, the Barbarians of the Holy Roman Empire, and last of all, Napoleon III., Emperor of the French, who, having won and lost everything, stripped himself last of all of ‘ the Palaces of the Cæsars,’ which he sold to the City of Rome during his exile in England. And those palaces had become a garden, a garden of wildflowers, under whose fleeting beauty Nature has hidden both Cæsar and Cæsar’s House ; the glory and the shame of the dead.

## V

### THE COLOSSEUM

**A**LMOST all the beauty which had in the time of our grandfathers made of the Colosseum the most mysterious and the most astounding ruin in Rome, contriving out of its mere size something monstrous, spellbound, has departed from it, perhaps for ever, since it has come within the radius of action, so unfortunately wide, of the improver and the restorer of ruins. With the destruction of those trees that grew along the broken arches, waving 'dark in the blue midnight,' and with the passing of the flowers, the Flavian Amphitheatre has become almost absurd in its rueful nakedness; a sort of inadequate monstrosity, a mighty heap of patched and ordered débris on the verge of the brickfield of the Forum and the slums of the lower slopes of the Esquiline Hill. Stripped and ashamed, with all its wounds exposed, to say nothing of the horrible patchwork of the archæologists, it is now just a vast and empty shell, that indeed scarcely impresses us, mere size being after all but a poor claim upon our notice. Yet of old it seems to have been the most wonderful thing in the City. *Quamdiu stet Colysaeus, stet et Roma*, sang the pilgrims.—While stands the Colosseum Rome shall stand, when falls the Colosseum Rome shall fall, and when Rome

falls—the world. Well, perhaps it too may serve as a symbol of the City. Its condition, full of modern improvement, neat, and almost orderly, in its decay, decked for the tourist, is certainly indicative of the condition of the modern Rome. She, too, has prepared herself, patched her streets, destroyed her gardens, emptied her convents for the sake of the tourist and the extraordinary crowd of people from Piedmont who, like another army of Huns, have descended upon her for spoil. The Colosseum is but an indication. Look at any picture of the place as it was even so recently as the eighteenth century, in the work of Turner, or Claude, or the careful paintings of Poussin, the prints of Piranesi, and you will realise at once what we have lost, what has been wantonly destroyed by the same gang of vandals who have lately turned the Cappella Rucellai in S. Maria Novella in Florence into a museum, and are now being led by a Jew who doubtless remembers the whips of Titus in destroying the Aurelian Wall. Yet one might think that the Colosseum should have deserved a better fate, from the Romans at least, however we of the north may regard it. For, as Martial is eager to remind us, it was built for their enjoyment after the death of Nero, that that which had been the delight of one man might now serve the pleasure of all. And indeed it fulfilled this purpose throughout the imperial age. Begun by Vespasian, in the gardens of the Golden House, on the site of the lake in which, like Narcissus, the son of Agrippina had adored his own beauty, it was finished by Titus, his son, and is really, like the Pyramids, the work of the Jews, whose lives here too were ‘bitter with hard bondage in mortar and in brick’; for



since the whole structure was completed within three years, doubtless 'all their service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigour.' Who the architect may have been we know not; but his work was finished in the year 50, and the Flavian Amphitheatre, as it was called, opened with a great spectacle.

An amphitheatre, that at Capua as this in Rome, was generally an oval building surrounding an ellipse covered with a floor of planks resting on deep subterranean walls among which the machinery and the cages of the beasts were placed. Within, the walls were lined with seats tier above tier, and without were arcades one above another, the lowest admitting to a corridor which ran round the building and from which a staircase led up to the different rows of seats. Here, in the Colosseum, there were four arcades—the first of Doric, the second of Ionic and the third of Corinthian columns, while the fourth was a wall decorated with Corinthian pilasters and pierced with windows. Within, immediately round the arena, a high and massive wall was built, within which were caves and vaults for animals. Above this, and protected by it, was the *podium*, where the seats of honour were placed for the Emperor and his family, for the Vestal Virgins and the great officers of the State. Above the *podium*, rose, in terrace after terrace, the seats for the Senators, for the magistrates and military knights, and then for the male citizens, while the women sat in the highest part of the building under a colonnade, parts of which, we are told, were portioned off for the common people. The whole of this vast space, capable, it is said, of seating more than seventy

thousand persons,<sup>1</sup> was sheltered from sun and rain by an awning supported on masts set in corbels of stone that jutted out from the wall that on high surrounded the building, while an ingenious contrivance allowed the arena to be flooded with water for those *naumachiæ* or naval fights to which Julius Cæsar had first accustomed the Romans in the Circus Maximus in B.C. 46.

The theatre thus completed in A.D. 80 was certainly the most tremendous stage the world has ever seen, nor did it stand alone in mere size, for the spectacle there provided remains the most monstrous of which any word has come down to us. Splendid and even marvellous in the harmony, largeness, and grace of its construction, the Flavian Amphitheatre is altogether lost sight of as a building in its tremendous moral significance. For nearly two thousand years its true name has been lost, in that of the Colosseum ; and this marks not merely a physical fact obvious to the most superficial observer, but a spiritual truth also of rarer significance. It was this monstrous colossus that overthrew Paganism and the Empire and served as the stage on which Christianity was at last to meet them both in combat and defeat them.

It might seem that no people save the Romans, no European people at any rate, have made of agony and death a spectacle to amuse the populace. They alone were ignorant of pity. The clemency that seemed to them so strange and even wonderful in Julius Cæsar is but a proof of the hardness, even the brutality, of the national manners. They seem, and their art

<sup>1</sup> The estimates differ very greatly. The bull ring at Valencia—the largest in Spain—will accommodate 70,000 people.

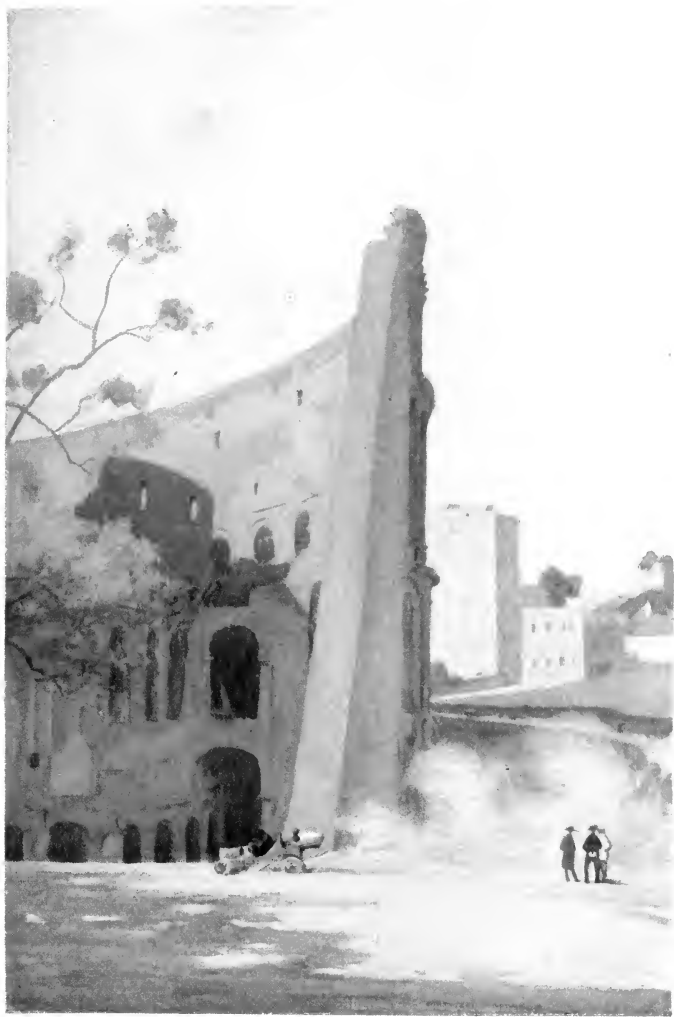
continually proves what their manners have led us to expect, to have been lacking in imagination ; not in force or in that mental grasp of the things of the great world which, with them, as with the English alone among modern people, was an instinct almost unconscious and perhaps ineradicable ; but in imagination, a kind of reverie, or shall I say a clairvoyance, which would have made such a thing as the Flavian Amphitheatre and all that it stood for, impossible, a nightmare haunting the moral consciousness—the soul. Beginning, perhaps, with a genuine indifference to suffering, a certain hardness that was part of their strength, little by little this insensibility to suffering—for which no shame or horror was really intolerable, so that the father would, without too intolerable a pain, condemn his son to death and even himself be his executioner, while such a punishment as that to which the faithless Vestal was condemned seems to have revolted no one—encroached on the soul, till cruelty, a kind of joy in speculating on the endurance of others, less indifferent certainly, put to the most dreadful of tests, came to be with them a kind of delight, which, secretly at first, but altogether openly at last, involved all their pleasures, their public entertainments in its marvellous horror. From the enjoyment of watching the skill of two trained gladiators, or of a gladiator, in dealing with a wild beast, there was but a step, it seems, to the breathless delight of seeing the appalled antics of some wretched criminal in the power of the lion or the bear, to the stripping of women and children at the mercy of a host of animals, to the long expectancy, with as much sport as might be in the interval, of the inevitable death of the helpless at the hands—yes, it

came to just that—of that most brutal populace which was Rome.

At first the gladiatorial combat had been but private sport offered amid the pomp of a funeral perhaps in memory of the Homeric Games ;<sup>1</sup> but already in the last years of the Republic these had come to be the favourite spectacles of the Roman people. Cæsar used them to gain the love of the Plebs ; but it was only under Augustus that they became, as it were, a national institution. That wily politician, intent on keeping Rome quiet, was able to boast in his last years that he had offered the people eight combats in which 10,000 gladiators had taken part. Little by little this lust for slaughter grew upon them until, under Domitian, the public shows, which of old came but twice in the year, were declared obligatory on ten days at least. But even this, in the light of what came later, seems but a beginning, for Trajan after his Dacian victories gave a contest which lasted 123 days and employed 10,000 gladiators, as many indeed as Augustus had used in twenty years. When at last the professional gladiators no longer sufficed to appease the passion of the people, recourse was had to the lowest criminals and to prisoners from every part of the Empire.<sup>2</sup> The thing became a sort of trade in

<sup>1</sup> The custom seems to have come from Etruria, where it was a survival of the human sacrifices formerly used at funerals.

<sup>2</sup> Originally Roman citizens could not be sentenced to the arena, but later this punishment was extended to criminals of low condition. Sometimes they were prisoners of war, or slaves, or even volunteers, for the arena was often the last recourse of a ruined man. Such were called *Auctorati*. Troops of gladiators were often kept by the rich, or as a speculation by trusts. The emperors kept schools of gladiators under procuratores of equestrian rank. In Domitian's time there were four such schools in Rome.



THE COLOSSEUM



which the tribunals acted as purveyors, and a regular service of caravans was run along the great roads from Gaul and Pannonia. But since many of these wretches gave but poor sport when matched either with one another or with a trained gladiator, they were most often reserved for the fight with beasts on the occasion of a triumph. In that vast space resounding with terrible cries, we have stood beside our brothers, Germans from the far away Rhine, Bretons and Gauls, Dacians, Alains and Ethiopians, and those, too, who were to avenge us, the Goths whose children under Alaric, only six years after the last combat, that which celebrated the victories of Stilicho under Honorius, thundered at the gates of the Eternal City. It was there in the awful din and horror, under the cruel eyes of those who had failed to understand, that our soul was born, that soul which was to make such a spectacle as that for ever impossible. And amid the bravery, the unspeakable courage and devotion of our friends who, a new love in their hearts, stood beside us, we, too, bewildered in the glaring sunshine did not disgrace the dream in our hearts. One day we read that thirty Saxons, as they were about to be led into the Circus, strangled themselves in their prison.

All the fate of the world was decided in the arena of the Flavian Amphitheatre. It was Rome who stood there at the tribunal of humanity and heard the universal verdict—guilty. In passing through the Forum, or among the ruins of the Palatine Hill, and remembering the disastrous story of her days since then, we may well ask—for we are not of her company—is her punishment harder than she can bear?

Yes; it was on the bloody floor of the Colosseum that

Rome contrived her own slavery and our freedom. It was there that Christianity met the world and overthrew it, there the martyrs won for Christ His kingdom in the hearts of men—and certain poor folk, almost nameless, men, women and children, weak too, weeping and afraid, overthrew for ever the despotism of Rome.

So the Colosseum, that monument of our love, fallen into ruin, for it is the privilege of Love to forget the unforgettable, came in the Middle Age to be the most fabulous thing in Rome, and to serve rather than the Capitol even, differently too, as a symbol of the City : so that we sang to ourselves as we passed by, the old song of the English pilgrims :—

Quamdiu stet Colysaeus  
Stet et Roma  
Quando cadet Colysaeus  
Cadet et Roma  
Quando cadet Roma  
Cadet et Mundus.

And no one any longer remembered the cruelty of the Roman people.

Yet dimly some memory of evil hung about it. 'It is the old Temple of the Sun,' we would tell one another, as passing from church to church we climbed toward Our Mother S. Giovanni in Laterano ; till a rumour ran through the crowded, straggling ranks of the pilgrims, coming, it seemed, from one who was a clerk and had learning. And ever after we told ourselves that that vast ruin, dark with trees to its very summit, was the work of a magician, one Virgil, wise at his business, who in a song of passing sweetness had prophesied the joy of Our Lady and the birth of Christ. And thinking



of this we passed on and on to the shrine of the Apostle.

The Romans, however, cursed with hatred, had no such illusion, or, if they had, it profited them nothing. For, magical or no, the barons Frangipani and Annibaldi turned it into a fortress for civil war, till in 1312 the Emperor Henry VII. took it from them and restored it to the Senate and the people. And as might have been expected, they used it, as well as they could, in the old fashion, organising there bull fights and such. Incurrible Rome! It was only after the return of the Holy See from Avignon that these spectacles were put an end to, and the Colosseum, already in ruins, became a quarry for the Popes. From the earliest years of the Renaissance to its last moments under Paul III. the walls were destroyed daily to furnish stone for the new buildings, till, deserted at last, it became the lair of wolves, which Julius II. proscribed in 1512, setting a price on their heads. Again in the eighteenth century it was used for material till—was it only to prevent further damage, or may we see in it one of those acts of imagination on the part of the papacy, not so rare after all?—Benedict XIV. consecrated it to 'The Passion of Jesus Christ,' Who in the place where so many martyrs confessed His Name and assured Him the victory, speaks neither of anger nor of punishment, but seems to remind us, there surely more than anywhere else in the world, of that 'new commandment' ' . . . that ye also love one another.'

## VI

### THE PANTHEON

THE continuity of the life, of the political life of the City that is so well expressed by the Capitol is found too, in its religious aspect certainly, in the Pantheon, which, since the time of its foundation, has always been sacred to the gods, to the saints, those Divi—Divinities, as both Pagans and Christians have agreed to call them. If we need, then, a witness to the continuity of the religious life of the City, of the slow and after all so gentle passing of Paganism into Christianity, in the hearts of men, at any rate, with many a strange and beautiful conservation of old things, old customs, old ways of thinking, we shall find it best, perhaps, in the Pantheon, which, sacred once as we may suppose, to the protecting divinities of Cæsar, now holds the dust of the last conquerors from Piedmont.

‘There is nothing,’ says Horace, ‘that the earth has hidden, but Time shall bring it forth into the sunshine’ :—

*Quicquid sub terra est in apricum proferet aetas ;  
defodiet condetque nitentia.*

‘and how many things now glittering it will bury and hide away.’ Though we may never see Agrippa’s

colonnade<sup>1</sup> of which he speaks, the Pantheon, which he built in B.C. 27, remains the most perfect ancient building in Rome, the only one, indeed, whose walls and arches have been completely preserved. Born in B.C. 63 and dead in B.C. 12 Agrippa was the friend and later the son-in-law of Augustus, as well as his general and minister. And as it seems, for the original purpose of the building is unknown, it was to the Julian House, the divine Cæsar, that he built the Pantheon, that all-divine place which was one of the greatest monuments of the ancient city, built with all the solidity, boldness and splendour of the Roman genius, and remains one of the wonders of the world. A circular structure, 142 feet and 6 inches in height and diameter, its beautiful portico framed by sixteen Corinthian columns 47 feet high, was 103 feet long. Of the columns, eight support a massive pediment, behind which rises another, still higher, set against the blind loggia which connects the portico with the dome. The other columns separate and divide the portico itself into three parts that of old were covered by vaults, and there beside the entrance are the two niches which once held the colossal statues of Augustus and Agrippa, the emperor and his friend. The tremendous walls of the *rotunda*, a perfect circle, are divided into two stories by ring courses, while above them springs the most wonderful thing in Rome, that cupola of concrete, covered over with tiles of gilded bronze, which was once the greatest dome in the world. The diameter is indeed the same as that of

<sup>1</sup> This colonnade was built by Agrippa's sister, Polla, and called Porticus Pollae. It was there that Augustus caused to be engraved in marble the circular map of the world which Agrippa had made.

the building itself, the walls which support it being 19 feet in thickness. Divided into five circles of deeply sunk panels, twenty-eight in each circle, diminishing in size as they ascend, it is crowned with a crown of light 27 feet in diameter, which floods the whole sanctuary with its marvellous glory. Within, the temple was lined with precious marbles, while in the seven niches that were set in its circumference stood, as we may suppose, the images of the gods, though only those of Mars and Venus, the deities of the Julian House, are known to have been there. The whole place was so spacious and wonderful that even in antiquity it was supposed to derive its name from heaven itself, lighted as it was by the sun or the moon, while round about the statues of gods were set, those seven planets which ruled the destinies of men. It is no wonder that the applause which greeted Agrippa passed almost into a proverb, so that Horace would warn us against hoping for such praise :—

. . . scilicet ut plausus quos fert Agrippa feras tu,  
astuta ingenium vulpes imitata leonem.

And to-day the Pantheon is like a sudden revelation, as though in an unexpected moment we had come upon a legion of Cæsar's army, or in the quiet sunlight, amid the ruins of the Forum, had heard the persistent voice of Cato in the Senate House : *Delenda est Carthago*. Yet it has suffered much from restoration, even in antiquity. It was first altered by Domitian, and then, struck by lightning in the time of Trajan, it was restored by Hadrian, who, it seems, left only the portico altogether unchanged, and indeed it is to him rather than to Agrippa that we owe the

whole of the present *rotunda* and the beautiful dome. Then in A.D. 202 Septimius Severus and Caracalla had their way with it. So it remained in some sort a Temple of the Gods—of all the gods, it seems, for the misunderstanding which has turned this 'all-divine' place into a temple 'of All the Gods' began early—till Phocas the tyrant, in the exile of the gods, presented it to Pope Boniface IV., who on May 13, 609, consecrated it, placing it under the protection of S. Mary of the Martyrs, as though to endorse our belief that the gods were after all only in exile, and would return to comfort us one day, changed, and yet how little changed, by their sorrow, so that Venus comes to us with tears in her eyes, since Eros, Love himself, is as Mary Madonna, and Apollo has been slain with cruel arrows and lives even as S. Sebastian, and Perseus, that proud prince, has killed another dragon as S. Giorgio: and indeed there is nothing strange in it at all, for who should believe more surely in the gods than the gods themselves? yet some of them are gone astray.

So the Pantheon became S. Maria ad Martyres, and to ensure its sanctity the Pope caused to be buried there twenty-eight wagon-loads of the bones of the martyrs brought hither from the catacombs. Then began the spoliation: as though after all one were not sure that the gods had indeed been converted, that Madonna was friends with the Mother of Love, or Love himself reconciled with Him who passeth all understanding. Was it a suspicion of the narrowness of the hearts of men, who had suddenly found a new master, that excused Constans II. when, in 655, he stole those precious tiles of gilded bronze for his

palace in Constantinople. It was only with lead that Pope Gregory III. covered the church some eighty years later, for the gods were humbler than of old, and, instead of our most precious possessions, demanded now but an humble and a contrite heart. And yet it still kept about it some shadow of its ancient wonder and holiness, so that we find in the thirteenth century that every Senator was obliged to take an oath to defend it and preserve it for the Pope. Yet it was the Pope himself who did his best to destroy it, for Urban VIII. stole the brazen tubes on which the roof of the vestibule rested, to convert them into the twisted columns of the baldachino of S. Peter—*Quod non fecerunt Barbari, fecerunt Barberini*. And if of old it excited the wonder and awe of the City, and in the Middle Age guarded the dust of the Martyrs, certainly then, more precious than silver or gold, in the Renaissance it became the very model of the greatest buildings of that time. The Baptistery of Florence was certainly meant to be as like it as might be; it inspired the dome of S. Maria del Fiore, and Michelangelo swore to build it, as it were aloft, over S. Peter's, an oath which he contrived to keep; while it was there that Raphael preferred to lie, with his betrothed beside him and his disciples at his feet, pursuing the dream of beauty which, as was said, had ravished him from our world.

And to-day, too, it is there that Italy has laid her kings—him who came down with gifts from Piedmont and him who fell by the dagger at Monza. There, under that marvellous dome, between the altars of forgotten gods in the temple of the deities of Cæsar, on the dust of a thousand martyrs, they lie, yes, at the feet of the

gods, and of Her, too, whom we have given them for Queen, adding to the heaven of our fathers that Goddess also, Pity, the Mother of Love, Madonna Mary in whom, as it were, in whose purity, love, and sorrow, we still in some sort possess those who once, as we may believe, had here their dwelling, Diana who went swiftly and was a maiden, Venus whose name was mixed of bitter and sweet, Demeter who in tears sought so long for Persephone. And so here in the Pantheon which in itself is a witness to the continuity of the City, of its life, its art, and its religion, Mary Madonna is not only Regina Martyrum but Regina Sanctorum Omnium too, or, as the men of the Renaissance would certainly have put it, returning after the Middle Age with a sort of homesickness to the old Pagan world that they feared, how needlessly, was lost for ever—Regina Divorum Omnium—Queen of all Gods.

## VII

### THE COLUMN OF TRAJAN

OF the many Fora which under the Empire sprang up in the neighbourhood of the Forum Romanum, the Forum Pacis of Vespasian that lay close to the Basilica of Constantine behind the Basilica Æmilia, the Forum Nervæ that joined it on the west and led again into the Forum Augusti, which in its turn led under a Triumphal Arch into the Forum Trajani, only the last and most splendid of all remains to us in those few ruins which serve to remind us of the Greek architect Apollodorus who built here with so much magnificence the Basilica Ulpia, the two libraries, the Temple *Divi Trajani*, the Triumphal Arch, the two hemicycles and the Column which occupied or surrounded the Forum of Trajan. Of all these great and splendid things but one has come down to us practically intact—the Column in which, closed in a golden urn, the ashes of the Emperor were destined to lie till Alaric and his Goths spoiled it of its treasure.

It was, it seems, a Greek custom to set up sometimes a single column as a memorial to some great or noble personage or in commemoration of a victory. In erecting the *Columna Rostrata* in the Forum Romanum, adorned with the beaks of ships, in memory of the naval victory of Duilius over the Carthaginians in



261 B.C., the Romans, after all, were but following a precedent. It was thus nothing new that Trajan did when, in 113 A.D., he erected, in the midst of the Forum he had built, a column to commemorate his Dacian victories. The astonishment lay doubtless in the continuous episode and in the magnificence of the work rather than in the memorial itself. For the shaft standing on the tomb of the Emperor, a four-sided pediment adorned with trophies of war, rises a hundred and twenty-four feet into the air. Tapering very slightly it has a diameter of ten feet at the base, while within, a spiral staircase of a hundred and eighty-five steps leads to the summit where stood the gilded statue of Trajan, which in 1587 was replaced by a bronze figure of S. Peter. The shaft itself, formed of twenty-three drums of marble, is covered with a series of reliefs three feet and three inches high, a great procession of two thousand five hundred figures, animals and engines of war, mounting, as it were, on a winding way twenty-three times round the column to the top, to the very feet of the Emperor who stood there. And what is so surprising, so astonishing and new in this, perhaps the most beautiful of all Roman works that have come down to us, is just that continuous episode, the whole campaign told us in chapter after chapter realistically, as an historian might tell it, with a sincere insistence upon just facts, on the natural difficulties of that German country, of the crossing of the great river, and yet with a marvellous idealism, an idealism of form, at any rate, so that it is by no means impossible to think of these reliefs beside those of the frieze of the Parthenon. And yet the intention here is, how different from that of the Greek

who has conceived, yes, an 'idealised state,' a whole people lifted out of itself into a world perfect, as we might say, in communion for a moment with the gods. Here, on the column of Trajan, we have after all Roman work, Roman work at its best, expressing Roman thoughts and ideas so perfectly that, as has lately been said, these sculptures are the splendid counterpart of the historic prose of Rome. Even the form, that continuous episode, was Roman, as we may see if we examine the wall-painting dating from about 200 B.C., divided into four zones, now preserved in the Palazzo dei Conservatori. And the artists are unknown. It was Rome herself who thus expressed just herself, her idea of war, of victory, of the business of the Emperor, of that shadowy divinity which fell upon him on the day he mounted the throne of Augustus.

To describe these sculptures in any detail would require not a short chapter, but a book. I must content myself with referring the reader to the work of Petersen and of Mrs. Arthur Strong, whose excellent work on Roman Sculpture has made us acquainted in our own tongue with a subject unaccountably obscure and neglected. What is so striking in this marvellous and heroic history, so profoundly Roman, is the continual presence of Trajan. The Emperor, idealised certainly, the true father of his country, of the Empire, is always present, full of counsel, of authority, of encouragement, not disdaining menial tasks such as scouting and bridge-building, but at all times and everywhere proving the soul of the army, the soul of Rome, before whom the Barbarian falls on his face, and in whom literally is the victory.

Who was this man, half divine with the shadowy divinity, that had fallen first on Julius Cæsar, from which even the worst of the Emperors could not escape, who was thus able to sum up and to express the very dreams and characteristics of Rome, in whom she seemed to see, as it were, her own image? Marcus Ulpius Trajanus was born at Italica near to Seville in September, A.D. 52. His youth was devoted to arms, and he seems to have served with real distinction both in Germany and in the East. Consul in 91, he was at the close of 97 adopted by the Emperor Nerva, whom he succeeded in the following year under the title of Imperator Cæsar Nerva Trajanus Augustus. Nor did he disappoint the promise of his youth. He heard of Nerva's death in Cologne, and returning slowly along the great roads he entered Rome on foot at last with his wife Pompeia Plotina, amid the shouting of the people. Almost at once the first Dacian war broke out, to be followed in 104 by the second against Decebalus, who, as was said, had broken the treaty. So Dacia was reduced to a Roman province; and Trajan, the idol of the people, was accorded a Triumph, which he celebrated by public games that lasted a hundred and twenty-three days. But his wars were not yet done with. In 114 he broke the Armenians, and spending the winter at Antioch, fell in the next year on the Parthians. In the course of two campaigns, attended by the most brilliant success, he reduced the Parthian Empire and took the capital Ctesiphon. Then he descended the Tigris and came into the Persian Gulf. He died on his way back to Rome in 117.

A life thus devoted to war, to victory, might seem

to have afforded but little time for the more generous achievements of peace, and yet, in spite of the splendid praise of the reliefs of the columns, as it were a plain-song winding its way upward to the feet of the divine Emperor, it is rather of his generosity, his clemency in devising those Agrarian laws celebrated on the balustrades of the Rostra that we think in remembering him, than of his successful wars, so much more strong is peace than victory. And indeed a kind of immortality, awarded to none other of all those who sat in the seat of Augustus, which even Marcus Aurelius—a Christian, as one might think, without knowing it—has failed to win, has been given to him in accordance with the general wish of mankind, expressed, as it is said, by Pope Gregory the Great. Trajan alone has been welcomed into the Paradise of the Christian Church, from which, as we know, even Virgil was excluded. It is there Dante sees him led by Beatrice in the midst of the sixth heaven. No victory, however glorious, would have sufficed to bring him there, where David reigns, but a victory of Love, that Pity of which the Romans seem to have known so little, from which even Marcus Aurelius has excused himself, preferring to endure all things rather than to weep.

It is one of the most curious legends of an age of legends which finds Trajan thus the one Pagan who, in the words of the Church, has found salvation; a vicarious salvation, it seems, without precedent or sequence. For, as it is said, while S. Gregory was one day walking in the Forum he stayed by chance beside that bas-relief where Italia is represented as thanking the Emperor for those generous measures of the year 101 A.D., for the protection and support of poor chil-

dren.<sup>1</sup> 'This benefaction,' says Dill, 'was a bold and sagacious attempt to encourage Italian agriculture, to check the ominous depopulation of Italy, and to answer the cry of the poor.'<sup>2</sup> The Pope, knowing nothing of the occasion, went away sorrowful. Could it be, he asked himself, that a prince so virtuous as to listen to the appeal of the widow and orphan was indeed damned past hope to the company of the wicked, the everlasting absence of Him who had said, Suffer little children to come unto Me and forbid them not? *Oravit et flevit*, says his biographer—he prayed and he wept. And his prayer was heard. 'Be consoled,' our Lord told him, 'I will pardon your Trajan. But be careful in future to intercede no more for the wicked.'

So Trajan was saved, but hardly; and even concerning him many theologians have, it seems, the gravest doubts, for such is their business. How can a Pagan be saved? they ask, with the irresistible logic of all their kind, that logic which, if ambition is the last infirmity of noble minds, is the characteristic weakness of the narrow soul. How can a Pagan be saved, since without baptism there is no salvation? But we who are rather human than theological may well reply that Trajan was saved, as were Peter and John indeed without baptism, by the infinite grace of God. For them, such an excuse from their dogma which would make even Paul a prisoner is inexplicable and absurd, but to S. Gregory, as to us, it seems but in the nature of things, the delightful nature of things wholly divine.

<sup>1</sup> Others say (and Dante seems to agree with them) that it was another bas-relief now lost.

<sup>2</sup> Dill's *Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius*, p. 192.

Yet for S. Thomas Aquinas a miracle yet more wonderful was necessary to explain the astonishment of this ; and we find him solving the difficulty by a suggestion that Trajan returned momentarily to the world, was baptized by Gregory, and so passed into heaven. This subtle explanation of the Angelic Doctor's in any other mouth might seem to doubt the omnipotence of God ; but it sufficed to convince the scholastic world, which could conceive apparently of nothing strong enough to break its laws—not even Will, which is the creative force of the universe—the will of God.

For Dante, however, theologian though he was, and possessed of the same pathetic hatred of variety as S. Thomas—the variety of the Italian states as opposed to his dream of unity, for instance—was yet a poet, ‘intelligent in love.’ In the tenth canto of the *Purgatorio* he describes the story graven in the white marble of the mountain of Purgatory:—

I moved my feet from where I had been standing  
To examine near at hand another story. . . .  
There the high glory of the Roman Prince  
Was chronicled, whose great beneficence  
Moved Gregory to his great victory ;  
'Tis of the Emperor Trajan I am speaking ;  
And a poor widow at his bridle stood  
In attitude of weeping and of grief.  
Around about him seemed it thronged and full  
Of courtiers, and the eagles in the gold  
Above them visibly in the wind were moving,  
The wretched woman in the midst of these  
Seemed to be saying : ‘Give me vengeance, Lord,  
For my dead son, for whom my heart is breaking.’  
And he answers her : ‘Now wait until  
I shall return.’ And she : ‘My Lord,’ like me

In whom grief is impatient, 'shouldst thou not  
Return?' And he : 'Who shall be where I am  
Will give it thee.' And she : 'Good deed of others  
What boots it thee, if thou neglect thine own?'  
Whence he : 'Now comfort thee, for it behoves me  
That I discharge my duty e'er I move ;  
Justice so wills, and pity doth retain me.'

Then in the sixth Paradise, in the iris of the Eagle's  
eye, whose pupil is David, Dante sees Trajan

Who the poor widow for her son consoled.  
Now knoweth he how dearly it doth cost  
Not following Christ, by the experience  
Of this sweet life and of its opposite.

It is strange that that goddess just come to our  
earth should have willed the salvation of the pitiful  
Emperor. Saved by Pity, new born into the world  
in spite of all rules and dogmas, useful and right but  
by no means omnipotent, Trajan is greeted in heaven  
by the great poet of Christianity, on the eve of the  
Renaissance of man, in the morning of our resurrection.

## VIII

### THE BATHS OF CARACALLA

**I**T might seem that the two characteristics of that later Roman civilisation that came to such tragic splendour under the Emperors, the two characteristics which mark it off from any other civilisation Europe has ever known, and impress us most to-day, were its indifference to death, to the spectacle of death, at any rate, a thing so hard to understand, and its care for the body, for even the smaller material needs of life which, in a sort of reaction, Christianity was so eager to condemn. If the Colosseum stands even yet as a memorial of the one, we are most vividly reminded of the other by the immense ruins of the Baths of Caracalla, at the foot of the Aventine Hill on the verge of the Appian Way. The greatest building in Rome, greater even than the Colosseum, these Thermæ, which Caracalla began and Elagabalus completed, were more than a mile in circumference, and could accommodate more than 1600 persons at the same time. It is difficult to realise that such a building was only a Bath; and indeed it was much more, for the Thermæ had come to be a public meeting-place, a sort of club, and a gymnasium.

Among the Greeks, warm baths were for long only used for special purposes, to take them often being looked upon as a mark of effeminacy. And indeed the



Athenians, even, never attained in this matter certainly to the luxury of the Romans under the Empire.

It was after the Second Punic war that the *Thermæ* began to multiply in Rome ; before that time men had been content to take a weekly bath merely in the *lavatrina* or wash-house, close to the kitchen. But about 200 B.C. Rome began to devote the hottest hour of the day, between two and three—the hour of the siesta—to the Bath, which with the *Gymnastica* gradually came to be the chief recreation, and therefore for a host of people the most important event, of every-day life. The Baths were then placed under the superintendence of the *ædiles*, a small fee, *balneaticum*, of a *quadrans*, about half a farthing, being charged for men, and rather more for women. Little by little the hours of bathing lengthened, as more and more it became the fashionable recreation, till, before the fall of the Republic, the Baths were open in the City from two o'clock till sunset, and in the suburbs were often lighted up and used long after nightfall.

It was, however, under the Empire that the daily bath grew really into the most absorbing function of life, among the wealthier people, at any rate : one bathed not once but many times a day. And if thus the *Thermæ* became the great meeting-place of the City, full of luxuries, music, for instance, and statues, the splendour of the arrangements, especially in private houses, increased too with the number of Baths. It was not only for bathing that one went there, but for conversation and exercise, to hear music or the verses of a poet, to lounge through the day. Already numerous in the time of Augustus, Agrippa, when he was *ædile*, added a hundred and

seventy *Thermæ* to those already in existence, and the Emperors did likewise, so that by the middle of the fourth century their number within the City alone was not far short of a thousand.

Agrippa, the first great builder of baths, was the first too, it seems, to introduce the *Thermæ* or hot baths, such as those which in southern Italy were already in use, attached to the Greek gymnasia. It was about this time then that the Baths began to be built with at least three chambers, each having separate parts for the use of women. The *Tepidarium* was a room heated with warm air in which one reclined after undressing. Thence one passed into the *Caldarium*, where the hot bath was taken in a tub, *solium*, or a basin, *piscina*. Passing again through the tepidarium, one entered at once the *Frigidarium*, where one took the final cold bath or douche. This being over, one entered a special apartment, or perhaps in one of the older baths the tepidarium, to have oneself scraped with the *strigilis*, rubbed down with a linen towel, and anointed with oil. Dressing-rooms, withdrawing-rooms, cloisters and halls for reading and conversation were, in the more luxurious baths, at any rate, everywhere provided. And indeed so general was the luxury and so fond were the Romans of it, that it was not uncommon for a rich man to bequeath a sum of money to throw open the Bath to all for a day, or a week, or even for ever.

The Baths of Agrippa, of Nero, of Vespasian and Titus had already filled Rome with *Thermæ* when Caracalla thought to outdo all his predecessors by building in the Appian Way the immense Baths whose ruins we now see. A mile in circumference, this enormous Bath was open at certain times for the

free use of every citizen, whether Patrician or Plebeian, and could accommodate some sixteen hundred persons at one time. The domes—the dome of the Laconian or hot-air bath, for instance—were covered with mosaics, and the walls were lined with precious marbles from Egypt and Numidia. Even the pipes and taps and fittings generally were of silver and bronze, while in the various halls and porticoes stood the most celebrated statues of the City—the Farnese Bull, the Venus of the Capitol, the Venus Callipyge, the Hercules and the Flora of Naples, the Dionysus of the British Museum.

‘Let us follow,’ says Lanciani in his *Ancient Rome*, ‘let us follow one of those elegant youths into one of the great *Thermæ*. He is welcomed on his entrance by the *ostiarius* or porter, a tall, majestic fellow with a sword at his side, and by the *capsarius*, or wardrobe-keeper, who takes charge of his wraps. Then follows a general salutation and kissing of friends, exchange of the last topics and scandals of the day; reading of the newspapers or *acta diurna*. The visitor then selects the kind of bath which may suit his particular case—cold, tepid, warm, shower, or perspiration bath. The bath over, the real business begins, as for example taking a constitutional up and down the beautiful grounds, indulging in athletic sports or simple gymnastics to restore circulation and to prepare himself for the delights of the table. The luxurious meal finished, the gigantic club-house could supply him with every kind of amusement: libraries, concerts, literary entertainments, reading of the latest poems or novels, popular shows, conversation with the noblest and most beautiful women. Very often a second bath was taken to prepare for the evening

meal. All this could be done by three or four thousand persons at the same time without confusion or delay, because of the great number of servants and slaves attached to the establishment.'

Returning perhaps from the Campagna towards evening along the Appian Way and coming suddenly upon those enormous ruins smouldering in red and purple and gold in the sunset, one understands, perhaps for the first time, one of the secrets of Rome, her contempt of smallness, of perfection, of mere detail, the delicate proportion of the Greek artist, in which every stone was of importance, and in place for a special need and purpose of beauty. Rome has never cared for just that, which makes its appeal after all to the few, and leaves the multitude, as it were, still inarticulate. In her there remained always the universal rather than the absolute, that catholicism which is her birthright, and in which good and bad are mingled for the sake of life. She has never expressed herself in any divine beauty, but has believed always in vastness, a true magnificence, in weight and spaciousness. She has taken the world captive by mere strength and bigness ; without understanding either the Greeks or the North she has overwhelmed them both by the universality of her appeal ; the cry of the multitude is in her voice, and she has found in her own heart every dream that has captured it. To her the Parthenon was a toy, a Gothic cathedral, a sort of barbarism—built altogether for the service of the gods they seemed to her, as it were, beside the point. For her there remained man, that enemy of perfection, to whom she, a sort of Titan after all, has brought gifts after his own heart. As it was in antiquity, so it is to-day. She is still the universal expression of



THE TOMB OF CARCILIA METELLA



the world. The Baths of Caracalla, the Colosseum, the Temples we know so well, will not bear comparison for a moment with any Greek work even of a poor period, and if in like manner we may compare things equally different in intention, we find the same failure in beauty in a sort of unity and completeness when we enter S. Peter's, for instance, or S. Giovanni in Laterano and remember Amiens or Chartres. But in the midst of our disappointment even, we seem to understand. Here are space and light, two universal things, necessary too for a vast multitude, and Rome has always believed them the two most splendid and majestic things in the world.

Certainly those enormous *Thermæ*, now so bare and almost, as one may think, without the sentiment of ruins, make to even the least sensitive, the most superficial among us, that universal appeal which is the secret of Rome. They are like the *débris* of a city beside which London in ruins would be just a brick-field, a mean desolation. Even now, when we have stripped them naked, when science has numbered the very bricks and forbidden the flowers, they seem to me in the twilight perhaps the most wonderful thing in the world. What we have spoiled for the sake of fools! A traveller in the first years of the nineteenth century saw, or might have seen, so much more than we may see. 'I passed,' writes such an one, 'through a long succession of immense halls, open to the sky, whose pavements of costly marbles and rich mosaics, long since torn away, have been supplied by the soft, green turf that forms a carpet more in unison with their deserted state. The wind, sighing through the branches of the aged trees that have taken root in them without rivalling their loftiness, was the only

sound we heard ; and great birds bursting through the thick ivy of the broken wall far above us were the only living things we saw.'

Well, one might think that a place so lonely, so deserted, might have been left untouched in the beauty that time had bestowed upon it. It was the Italian Government, we learn, that destroyed the evergreens and the flowers, men even being 'let down by ropes . . . to tear out any stray plant which . . . found a resting-place in the sides of the walls.' Were they seeking for the eternal life of the City, that secret continuity, which is insatiable and inexhaustible? If it be so, they need not have destroyed a single flower to find it. Yet you might think it the last place in which to seek so illusive a thing. Ah ! but the eternity of Rome manifests itself everywhere, everywhere if you can but see. 'This Poem,' says Shelley in the Preface to the *Prometheus Unbound*, 'was chiefly written upon the mountainous ruins of the Baths of Caracalla, among the flowery glades, and thickets of odoriferous blossoming trees which are extended in ever-winding labyrinths upon its immense platforms and dizzy arches suspended in the air.' Did he remember Horace? Did he remember that it was in the Baths that the poets were wont to recite and try their verses?

In medio qui  
scripta foro recitent sunt multi quique lavantes :  
suave locus voci resonat conclusus.

'Many recite their writings in the midst of the Forum or in the Bath ; they say the voice sounds sweetly in the enclosed place.' No, for sure he was unconscious, being a part of that eternity which in some sort he uttered and there made manifest.



## IX

### THE CATACOMBS

THE Catacomb—the place by the tombs, in which to the curious philologist every symbol of Christianity seems to lie hid, the cup of the Holy Grail, the ship of the Church, was indeed the very cradle of Christianity, of Catholicism, where Love lay helpless, a little child—Pity, love's own self—till He was strong enough to take the whole world into His arms. Born, as it were, in the desert, in the stony silence of Judæa, Christianity, by an act of Love, had at once solved the great mystery : it was in itself a denial of Death, of the power of Death, and as though to prove its sincerity, its belief in the hope it alone had dared to offer mankind, it made its first home in the Catacombs, those cemeteries of the dead. They too are of our company, it seemed to say, for Death is not death but a sleep ; and so it refused to be separated from them, waiting patiently beside their resting-place, really in communion with them who had slept and wakened. The Christian alone in Rome found hope in his heart. Yes, while the City amused herself at the Bath or grew weary with horror at the Circus, that little society, secret so reluctantly, driven underground, waited, not without songs—the songs of children mainly, we are told—beside the tombs, where alone it was safe, far from the Pagans, in those burial places which gradually

grew, outside the City, about certain villas along the Appian Way or between it and the Via Ardeatina; the villa of Lucina, for instance, or the house of Cecilia, places excavated by the householder and inviolable, as were all places of sepulture declared by their owners to be religious, to belong to their *cultus* or sect. There in the darkness, lighted only by occasional *luminaria*, they celebrated their mysteries, even in the time of the Apostles, the Mass, the *Commendatio Animæ*, the *Funeralia*, refusing always to speak of the departing brother or sister as dying, but rather as of one summoned or called away, *accersitus*, as the beautiful Roman inscription has it, *accersitus ab angelis*—summoned by angels.

These cemeteries, later to bear the names of Saints, S. Calixto, S. Sebastiano, S. Balbina among the rest, excavated almost entirely in the volcanic soil, stretched really for miles outside the Wall on the left bank of the Tiber. And beside them were the gardens—*horti*—those cemeteries in the open air: the *Hortus Hilariae* where S. Hilaria was buried, the *Hortus Justi* where lay S. Nicomedes, the *Hortus Themis* beside the Via Ostia where they buried S. Timothy. These gardens were, however, comparatively few and were too public to be used for worship. It was in the Catacombs, so many of which still remain unexplored, that the Christian Church spent its childhood, in those five especially which date from Apostolic times, and which were added to little by little, till in the third century we find some forty-five, only twenty of which were still in the hands of private owners, the rest being under the government of the *Ecclesia Fratrum*. For with the growth of the Catacombs, their enlargement, till one

led into another, the Church herself took command ; these places of sepulture which she attached each one to a parish church being indeed her first possession and remaining for ages the most holy shrines in the City. ' The people of Rome ' writes S. Jerome, ' have left the ancient Temples covered with cobwebs and rust, the golden Capitol squalid with filth, while they pour out from the City and run to the Tombs of the Martyrs.'

Serenity, a bold and confident gladness, grave and yet by no means without its more joyful moments, would seem to have been the most striking characteristic of the life of the Catacombs, expressing itself in many a beautiful or graceful custom accommodated to the human heart, a little wistful perhaps after the years of persecution, in a strange power of sweetness and patience and especially in a wonderful new music and poetry. With the inexplicable blindness of all the best minds of that old Pagan world, Tacitus, like Marcus Aurelius later, has failed to understand the joy in the heart of that new song, recording with a curious bitterness in A.D. 58 the conversion of Pomponia Grecina, the first Lucina, whom he thinks of ever after as leading a life *lugubre et mæstum*, dejected and mournful, in a retirement little less complete than that of the grave. Yet as we know, even in those days of austere *ascêsis*, that element of profound serenity in the soul of her Founder was part of the very being of the Church, soon in the Minor Peace under the Antonines to come to its own—to involve her altogether in its beauty and sweetness. It was, as it were, the very soul of her song. Singing certainly, ' though often it dared only be of the heart,' there had been,

from the first, the singing of children, as on the morrow of a great deliverance. Was it only that song which Pliny heard, caught it might seem, almost in spite of himself, by its freshness and blitheness, long a stranger in that complicated Roman world, was it only that morning or evening song—like the evening itself full of hope and fear, and yet with the stars there in the darkness after all,—or was it, yes, something more eager, more mysterious even than that, which he heard as he passed in the early morning on his way to the City?

Introibo ad altare Dei :

Ad Deum qui laetificat juventutem meam.

The Mass indeed would seem to have been said always, even in the Apostolic age, almost as we have it to-day, for 'its details,' as has been well said, 'as one by one they became visible in later history, have already the character of what is ancient and venerable.' A ritual, altogether expressive and full of meaning—a meaning often obscure to us in its detail at any rate—grew little by little about it in those early times really for the sake of expressing some profound mystery that could only thus be made plain, which it was not lawful to speak. And for the Christians of the Minor Peace certainly, the ritual of the Mass, its action namely, was altogether indicative, not hiding but expressing the very 'heart of the mystery,' which for them, as for us, was often rather obscured than made plain by the words, then in the Greek language, the people answering in their own vulgar tongue, that colloquial or base Latin into which, though without any more popular success, the whole of the Liturgy has gradually passed: but not without leaving certain indications of its Greek origin, the

dreadful vocatives in the Mass of Good Friday for instance, the old plea for mercy of the *Kyrie Eleison*.

There, certainly, in Lucina's house on the Via Appia, amid what we now call the Catacomb, the cemetery of S. Calisto, the Mass was sung, already before the final triumph of the Church, substantially complete. In the old Pagan worship, in its essence at any rate an act of worship, of appreciation of the beauty of the world, the warmth and splendour of the sunshine, the refreshment of the rain, the serenity of the blue sky, there might seem to have been little for the understanding to be busy about. But in that earliest act of Christian worship, eloquent and yet reticent of so much, there was more than enough for intellectual reception, a whole new world of thought revolving round a fact or series of facts known to every one, and, rightly understood, the very secret of the whole. 'If we knew what the Mass was,' one has said who loved it exceedingly, 'we should die, yes, of joy and gratitude: for there, that which was the desire of the Patriarchs and was foreseen by the Prophets, of which the shepherds at Bethlehem, the Apostles at the last supper, Mary and the holy women on Calvary and at the holy Sepulchre, the Disciples after the Resurrection, were witnesses, we see ourselves to-day.' While Pope Innocent III. tells us that 'the order of the Mass is arranged on a plan so wonderful that everything done by Jesus Christ from His Incarnation to His Ascension is there contained in words and in actions wonderfully presented.' And indeed amid those sacred readings, in silence at certain intervals, or again with bursts of chanted invocations, amid the many prayers and protests of love, the complicated but expressive

ritual of an act of sacrifice, little by little the drama, the dramatic narrative disengages itself till it appears with all the vividness of a picture, and we see that mournful Figure towards whom the whole act of worship is continually turned, who has, as it were, summed up in Himself all the impassioned hopes of man, as the hero, the central figure of a divine tragedy—the tragedy of the Life and Death of Jesus Christ.

It was then as a dramatic action, a tragic drama, as we might say, that the Mass from the earliest times presented itself to those who in the subterranean oratories of the Catacombs were gathered together not merely in a common act of worship to hear the words of life, to be made partakers with Christ of the Kingdom of Heaven, but chiefly to remind themselves of the great deliverance won for them by that mournful and heroic Figure who passed before them in the words of the drama, the actions of the priest, from birth to death, to resurrection, into His Heaven.

Among a people to whom gesture meant so much, often surpassing words in an emphasis of sorrow, disaster, or joy, the mere acting as we should say, the natural expression of the thought and emotion of their hearts, was easy to follow, to expand to the full measure of its intention ; and in those serene moments, joyful so gravely, there would certainly be no need or desire for any unseemly or disorderly emphasis either of gesture or expression. The proper action of the rite had already become as secure as the rite itself, difficult enough for the uninitiated, but easily understood by all who had ‘ears to hear’—or, for that matter, eyes to see, for the action not only interpreted the words, but in some wonderful manner was in itself

dramatic, making together with the words a single piece of music in which you might not divide the form from the matter, the subject from that perfect expression of it. Thus the story of the life and death of Christ, fading already from the memory of men, of men who had heard of it as the wonder of a far land, was caught up and made immortal by an art unconscious for the most part and highly dramatic, universal too in its appeal, as no Greek play or even the more human work of Shakespeare has ever really been.

That heroic Figure round whom the Tragedy gathers is, you might think, inexplicably absent, is never represented there, the whole mystery, if such it be, centering indeed in the actions and words of one person, but not He, arrayed in beautiful vestments, and aided now and then by assistants, at an altar strangely like a tomb before which the whole drama passes like a great procession, to which it leads and from which it issues ending so inexplicably in farewell.

That marvellous work of art, perfect from the beginning, like a melody which cannot but proceed to an assured end, might seem for the Christians of the Minor Peace, as for us to-day, to have fallen naturally into three parts, corresponding to the three periods of Our Lord's life. Preceded by a Prologue concerned with the old world before the advent of the Prince of Life, the first part from the *Introit* to the *Credo* traces His life to the Last Supper; the second from the *Credo* to the *Paternoster* showing His suffering and Death; while the third, from the *Paternoster* to the *Ite, missa est* embraces all His glorious Life on earth.

For the acceptable soul certainly, acceptable always in proportion to what it can admire, such a vision of

the most wonderful act of worship the world has ever seen is even to-day not too difficult, but for the Christian of the Minor Peace it might seem to have been just a matter of course.

We can picture such an one a little weary after a long night journey along the Appian Way, still at dawn some little distance from the City, arrested suddenly on his way by that singing Pliny heard, and knowing its import, turning out of the road through that narrow door in the vineyard wall of the old villa, and, following the path, coming to that 'gap of blackness' in the grassy hill at the back of the house and so descending by devious, narrow ways, lined with the names of those already sleeping—his own friends perhaps—till he would come at last to the 'Church in Lucina's House' to remind himself once more in the early spring morning of that great deliverance.

And so one's first impression on entering one of those catacombs to-day is altogether of serenity and peace; a kind of ecstatic happiness, temperate and still fresh with a hope that has never quite passed away. On the walls one reads words of quiet expectation, full of light, confidence, and repose: *Pax*, you read, *Pax tibi*, in *Pace Christi* or *Vivas in Deo*; and then sometimes, as though to sum up all contentment, *Vivas in Christo*, in *Bono*. And the scenes painted there are serene and glad. In those days at any rate they do not seem to have been pre-occupied with the Crucifixion, the death of Christ; they thought only of the resurrection. A certain Latin sanity and quietness are expressed in the work we find there; and indeed there is no hatred or contempt at all of Pagan thought or religion, nor even



a complete repudiation of it, for it remains, yes, a real thing, seen with new eyes as we might say, seen really for the first time, and drawn gently into the service of Christ, so that Orpheus becomes as it were but a prophecy of Him there in S. Calixto, and the Good Shepherd bears the lamb on his shoulders precisely as Hermes had been wont to do, but with a new tenderness. The continuity of life, of art the most sensitive expression of life, was not to be interrupted even by that New Song, which, as Clement of Alexandria tells us with reference not only to the story of Orpheus and Eurydice but to Paganism generally, 'has made men out of stones and out of beasts so that those even who were as dead, not being partakers of the true life, have indeed come to life again, simply by being hearers of this song.' The portrait of Christ is but seldom found, for already we seem to feel the shadow of the coming controversy between Tertullian, for instance, who continually reminded himself of the words of Isaiah 'He hath no form nor comeliness,' and his opponents who found in the Prince of Life the fount of all beauty. But when we do find a presentment of Him as in SS. Nereo and Achilleo, for instance, He is represented as young and bearded with a smile on his lips, splendid as Apollo, who has forgotten everything but that he is a god and our friend. Yet, it is a shadow, which hardly dims the serenity of this world, that we are aware of, when we consider how rare those presentiments of Christ really are. For in that world of the Catacombs surrounded by symbols of Hope one thought little of Theology, that madness which was to overwhelm everything in the fourth century;

one was content with the new Love born into the world which changed the whole aspect of life, of death, of conduct, so marvellously, and made things hitherto difficult and mysterious just a kind of joy. It was indeed a new 'state of soul,' really a new morality that one came upon suddenly in these dark obscure ways, out of the boisterous cruel delight of the Colosseum or the ennui of the Baths, a profound spiritual enthusiasm, an eager need of love, of the redemption of just that. There, as it were, after the agony of the arena, the new fraternity was born, the new brotherhood of man.

Side by side they lay down to sleep, the rich beside the poor, the bond by the free, all whom Christ had made equal, to await in perfect confidence the promised resurrection. They buried one another still by night, as they had been used to do, but the rite was no longer a gloomy or even a sad one: *Exercitia sunt . . . non funera*. And indeed the *Funeralia* of the earliest times were quite unlike those of the Middle Age even, less self-conscious, less self-reproachful. Then, as in our day too, for the Church is not forgetful, the *commendatio animæ* was said over the dying, with its pitiful cry for mercy, *Kyrie eleison*, its invocations and the marvellous prayer, *Libera, Domine, animam servi tui, sicut liberasti Petrum et Paulum de carceribus*; ending, too, still with a song: —*Requiem æternam dona ei, Domine: Et lux perpetua luceat ei*.

Nor have we added much, or even at all, to the rite itself. For the Christians even in the earliest days observed the customs of their ancestors, though in more seemly wise and with a new intention. The

ancient rite of extreme unction was administered, the dying being literally anointed with aromatic oils and balsams, till in the fourth century the body was merely touched in various places with myrrh. Then, singing still, they swathed them in stuffs, often precious, the arms close to the body, the *Funeralia* beginning where death had taken place and coming to an end in the cemetery itself. The ceremony was almost exactly that of a Mass for the dead, the same psalms were sung, but *cum omni gaudio* ; the sacrifice following, the sacrifice of the Eucharist, at the tomb itself. Sometimes, as though for comfort, the divine Species would be buried with the dead, but this was forbidden in the sixth century. There they laid them, one after another, thousand upon thousand in those subterranean galleries, closing the place carefully with cement and writing above *Dulcissima . . . in Pace. Vivas in Christo*. Often they would return to those silent resting-places through the long galleries always full of a far-away sound of children's voices singing. And one such, heartbroken in spite of himself for all that new joy, without a single look, kiss, or even a clasping of hands these many days, has written there over and over again the name he loved, *Sofronia, vivas . . . in Christo—Sofronia in Domino, Sofronia. . . . dulcis, semper vivas in Deo. Sofronia. . . .*

Ah, after all, in spite of that new joy come into the world so meekly, the bitterness is not gone :

Quis desiderio sit pudor aut modus  
Tam cari capitis ?

What promises will avail anything at all with the regret for ' so dear a head ' still fresh at one's heart ?

## X

### SAN CLEMENTE

THE greatest figure, certainly, after the Apostles themselves, of those early years before the Minor Peace under Antoninus Pius, would seem to have been Clement, Pope and Martyr, as the canon of the Roman Mass calls him, 'whose name,' as S. Paul himself tells us, 'is in the Book of Life.' The son of Faustinus, a Roman by birth, but of Jewish extraction, Clement was converted, it seems, by S. Paul, whom he afterwards attended so closely that for S. Jerome he is himself an apostle speaking, in that extraordinarily far-sighted Epistle to the Corinthians, for instance, with all the authority of one who had received the Faith from those who had in truth seen Jesus with their bodily eyes. He seems to have followed S. Paul not only to Philippi and on the long journeys with S. Luke and S. Timothy, but to Rome itself, where he found S. Peter preaching, and became indeed in some sort his disciple as S. Irenæus and Pope Zosimus testify. It is Tertullian, however, who tells us that S. Peter ordained him Bishop, appointing him, as some have thought, his vicegerent in Rome during an absence on a mission. However that may be, he was certainly Pope before he died, martyred in the Crimea, as is supposed, under Domitian, or even as some have it, under Trajan. *Nominis ejus memoriam*

*usque hodie Romæ exstructa ecclesia custodit*, as Jerome, writing at the end of the fourth century, has it : ‘ Even to this day the Church built in Rome preserves the *Memoria* of his name.’

The *Memoria* of Clement was his tomb or his dwelling, something certainly more tangible than his mere memory ; and as though to confirm us in such a belief, among the inscriptions published by Fabretti was one found on the bronze collar-plate of a slave, which spoke in unmistakable terms of the dwelling, the house of Clement. *Tene me quia fugi et revoca me Victori acolito ad Dominicum Clementis*—‘ Hold me fast, for I have run away, and bring me back to Victor the Acolyte at the Church in the house of Clement ’—*dominicum* being indeed, as S. Cyprian tells us, the place where Christians used to assemble in the days of persecution—the church that was in his house.

Any doubt, however, that we may have had as to whether the church of San Clemente occupied the site of the dwelling of S. Clement was set at rest by the discovery of the Irish Dominican, the late Father Joseph Mullooly, who, as it seems, loving the place, curious about it too, as who would not have been, wandering one day in the crypt came upon a piece of old wall-painting, and searching further, after many months of labour, found for us the *Memoria* of S. Clement, beside the old wall of the kings, the cave of Mithras, and the subterranean basilica we now see.

These important discoveries help to assure us that the present church was, as had been suspected, of the eleventh or twelfth century, while the walls of the subterranean basilica prove to be of the age of Constantine, that is to say, of the first quarter of

the fourth century, the Mithraic cave of the third century, the 'Memoria' or small 'stuccoed chamber' of the first, the 'titanic wall' taking us back to the days of the Tarquins or, as some think, to those of Servius Tullius.

That 'stuccoed chamber,' so carefully preserved directly under the apse of the old basilica, fills the place which in so many other churches is occupied by the shrine of the saint, under whose protection they are, and seems to confirm us in our belief that this was already a place of Christian worship in the first century. But if that be so, we may well ask ourselves how we are to explain the existence close beside this very place, and indeed opening into it, of a cave of the third century, sacred to a Pagan divinity.

The worship of Mithras, traces of which may be found at Rome in the time of Tiberius, in the second century became of a real importance, spreading under the Antonines through the whole Roman Empire. The Persian god of created light, of all earthly wisdom therefore, Mithras became identified with the sun, Phœbus Apollo himself, who disperses the darkness with its uncertainty and fear. Born from the rocks, he was generally worshipped in natural or artificial caverns; the immense number which have been discovered bearing witness to the universality of his worship. This cavern, so his religion taught, was the world into which the human soul must descend that it may be purified by many trials before it shall be worthy to pass on its way. And symbolically, the person initiated in his mysteries had first undergone a whole series of tests, as it were, some eighty in number we are told, always of increasing difficulty;

to prove himself at least capable of suffering hunger, thirst, scourging, and solitude without being subdued by agony, longing, or fear. Just there we seem to see the last effort of Paganism to meet Christianity, as it were, on its own ground, as it seemed to understand it, summing up really in the person of Mithras all the mythology of Olympus in order to defeat it. Little by little in the long fight which followed, by no means so sure in its result as it might appear—the Mithraic religion adopted certain Christian rites, but certainly such names given to the sun god as ‘ Lord and Creator of all things,’ ‘ Father and source of all life ’ may well have owed nothing at all to Christianity.

It was not till the end of the fourth century that a Christian Emperor dared to interfere or suppress Pagan rites, and, indeed, in 395 we are told sacrifices at private expense were still permitted. Yet S. Jerome, writing in 392, tells us that ‘ the *Memoria* of S. Clement is still preserved even to this day in the church built in Rome.’ It might seem then that the dwelling of Clement, that ‘ stuccoed chamber,’ venerated and used as an oratory by the Christian Church of the first three centuries, was confiscated, as many such *loca religiosa* were, during the Diocletian persecution (284), and used by the followers of Mithras, not reluctantly, we may believe, for their worship, the larger chamber, the cavern itself, being altered and rebuilt and converted into the necessary *spelæum*. Then in 312 in the Final Peace the Emperor Maxentius restored it to Pope Melchiades as having been originally Christian property. It was there, in the time of Constantine, that the old basilica was built above this shrine or memorial of S. Clement, and a hundred years later a Council sat

there. Pope Zosimus, writing to S. Augustine in 417 concerning the Pelagian Celestius, says, 'We sat in the Basilica of S. Clement, for he, imbued with teaching of Blessed Peter the Apostle, had corrected ancient errors with such authority, and had made such progress, that the faith which he had learned and taught he also consecrated by his martyrdom.'<sup>1</sup> Indeed a fragment of fresco preserved in the old basilica might well have represented this Council. From the time of its foundation the Church seems to have been continually embellished. The beautiful marble screen now in the upper basilica enclosing the *Schola Cantorum*, the ambones and the great Paschal candlestick, for instance, seem to belong to the sixth century, if we may believe the inscription found on one of the marble beams under the panels west of the Gospel ambo, to the pontificate of Hormisdas which lasted from 514 to 523. S. Gregory, we read, would often preach here, and took good note of the place, speaking very eloquently in a sermon at S. Paolo Fuori of S. Servulus, the beggar who used to sit in the porch there, 'rich in heavenly treasures,' while Pope Hadrian I. restored it, and his successor, Leo III., presented the basilica in 796 with 'a vestment of crossed work, having its borders studded with gold, and a silver corona of fifteen pounds' weight.'

It was about this time that the basilica was painted in fresco, though some fragments there are of earlier date, the young Christ in a *tondo* and a Virgin and Child being work certainly of the early part of the eighth century. But in the south-west corner of the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Constant. *Rom. Pont. Ep.*, p. 943, quoted by the Bishop of Clifton; *The Basilica of San Clemente in Rome* (London 1900), p. 26.



nave there is a series of frescoes painted in the time of Leo IV. (847-855), as the inscription there tells us—*SANCTISSIMUS. DOM. LEO. QRT. PP. ROMANUS.* One of these represents the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin ; and that is not surprising, since we learn that Leo IV. ordered the Octave of that Festa to be kept solemnly in the City, a thing unknown till his day. Among the rest we see the Crucifixion, with S. Mary and S. John on either side, the Maries with the Angel at the Sepulchre, Christ in Hades drawing forth Adam and Eve, and a fragment of the Marriage in Cana of Galilee. The wall on which these frescoes are painted was an addition, built probably at the time to strengthen the support of the roof, and then painted. We find the same restoration on the other side of the nave, where the strengthening wall is painted with frescoes of our Lord in Benediction with S. Andrew and S. Clement on either side, and S. Cyril and S. Methodius, 'the Apostles of the Slavs,' kneeling before Him, guarded by Archangels.

It was indeed S. Cyril and his brother S. Methodius who discovered the tomb of S. Clemente in the Crimea, or, as some say, on an island, or again in the depths of the sea. For, as Gregory of Tours has it, S. Clement was drowned, an anchor tied to his neck, and the angels under the sea built a shrine for him. Once every year, on his Festa, the sea itself, in adoration, ebbed, as it were, some three miles that the faithful might visit his shrine. But when S. Cyril came, whether in forgetfulness or punishment, we know not, this had not happened for five hundred years. S. Cyril, however, nothing doubting, began to search, and soon found the shrine on a little island now, given

up by the sea. The holy relics he carried away, carefully taking them always with him on his wanderings, till coming to Rome, Adrian II. and his clergy going out to meet him, he bore them with his own hands to the church of S. Clement, where some of them remain, the rest being in the great abbey of Cava in Abruzzo whither the Emperor Lewis Debonair carried them in 872, a present from the Pope.

It might seem that the frescoes more or less illustrating these events were painted not long after, and certainly they seem to be work of the ninth century. There we see S. Clement enthroned by S. Peter, with S. Linus on one side and S. Cletus on the other, spoiled by the floor of the upper church. Below S. Clement is saying Mass when he is interrupted by Sisinnius, first a persecutor of the Church and then a convert. This fresco may well represent his conversion. In another is set forth the life, death and recognition of S. Alexius, and then the legend of the child miraculously saved and found in the shrine of S. Clement under the sea. For it seems on one of these Festas a woman had taken her little son to that marvellous shrine built by the angels of the sea, and, as happened with Mary Madonna, she lost the child, nor would her weeping avail anything, for at the end of the day the sea returned, and so, frantic with grief, she left the place. And lo, returning next year, there he was safe and sound in the shrine of the angels in the sanctuary of S. Clement.

Last of all we see the translation of the relics of S. Clement by S. Cyril, the Pope and the Clergy.

The destruction which has for so long hidden this now subterranean basilica came upon it, we may

suppose, in 1084, when Robert Guiscard and his Normans sacked it on their way to deliver Pope Gregory VII., besieged by the penitent of Canossa in Castel S. Angelo. The old church seems to have been literally buried under the havoc of those costly saviours, so that Cardinal Anastasius, to whom the Episcopal chair in the upper church points as the builder of the present church—*hoc opus cepit, perfecit*—abandoned it altogether, and decided to build on its ruins the great church we now see, taking certainly from the old sanctuary everything he might, the marble screen, the ambones, the candlestick, the spoiled mosaic of the apse, the fragmentary pavement.

There we see what is substantially still a church of the eleventh century. The nave with its flat ceiling is separated from the aisles by sixteen antique columns : and the canopy with its four columns of pavonazetto is of the same period. It is, however, to the mosaic of the apse we turn with the greatest interest, since it may well have been a twelfth-century copy, in which much of the old material was used, of the mosaic of the lower church. It is perhaps a little disappointing, less remarkable certainly than that of S. Maria della Navicella, yet with a marvellous gift of decoration after all—and indeed just that is the chief quality of mosaic, which looks its best in old age. Among the tendrils of the vine Christ reigns on the Cross, twelve doves about his head, and Madonna and S. John weeping at his feet. Four fathers of the Church stand among certain shepherds, goats, harts, sheep and birds, as it were, beside the rivers of Paradise, where the Lamb reigns over the beloved city and the new Jerusalem (Rev. xx. 9, and xxi. 1.)

On the arch of the Tribune we see Isaiah, S. Lorenzo with his gridiron, S. Paul as a sailor, S. Peter and S. Clement with the anchor that drowned him, the sign of his martyrdom. Above is the head of Christ, the symbols of the four evangelists.

Little else calls for our attention—little else but the Cappella della Passione which the great Florentine Masolino painted in the fifteenth century for Cardinal Branda Castiglione. There on the arch over the entrance he has painted the Annunciation as though that were, as indeed it was, the beginning of our deliverance; and at the side stands S. Christopher, as though to carry us safely over the river of Death, into the meadows of Paradise. The Crucifixion over the altar seems to have named the chapel: but the paintings on either side are concerned with the life of S. Catherine of Alexandria and the life of S. Clement, the latter being very much spoiled. After the frescoes of the lower church, the mosaic of the apse, this work seems wanting in conviction—a painting done to order amid much that was achieved hardly, in a sort of darkness, just for love.

## XI

### SANTA PUDENTIANA

**I**N the second Epistle to Timothy, written from Rome in the time of Nero, the author S. Paul, or another who has unconsciously contributed more than any Council of any time to the constitution of ecclesiastical discipline, sends greeting to his correspondent from Pudens and Linus and Claudia, and all the brethren. Legend tells us that the Senator Pudens listening, unwillingly at first certainly, to the prayers of his daughters Praxedis and Pudentiana took S. Peter, at that time almost a fugitive, into his palace on the Viminal Hill, where later an oratory was built in the place where the Prince of the Apostles had spent his last days. Pudentiana can have been but a tiny child when she persuaded her father to give refuge to S. Peter, for later we hear of her, very definitely, herself mistress of that palace on the Viminal Hill, having escaped the Neronian persecution, as converting her whole household of some ninety-six souls and bringing them—she must then, it might seem, have been more than ninety years old—to Pope Pius I. (145-155) for Baptism. Under the Antonine law which forbade, though not cruelly, at any rate, the public worship of Christ, Pudentiana, we hear, received Pius with many Christians also into her house where Mass was still said daily in spite of the edict. ‘In

these Christian offices of piety we hear she passed out of this life' being buried on the 'fourteenth kalends of June beside the Via Salaria.'

Two figures, indeed, seem to pass under the name of Pudentiana, another daughter perhaps, the one comforting in early youth the last days of S. Peter, the other in like fashion supplying a refuge in time of trouble to Pope Pius I. and his fellows. However that may be, and the tradition is very definite, it was S. Praxedis we are told who between the years 141 and 145 persuaded the Pope to dedicate a church on the site of a palace where the Apostles themselves had taken refuge, and as was customary, this church went by the name of the mistress Pudentiana in whose house it was.

The church we see to-day, restored and spoiled though it be, is still substantially a building of the time of Constantine, of the great Renaissance which seems to have followed on the death of the first Christian Emperor. For, indeed, most of those early Christians, in Rome at any rate, far from being foes of the Empire, continually looked forward to the day of reconciliation, dreaming, though only in their hearts, of a Christian Empire which should hold the world for Christ. It seems to have been in the midst of the first expression of this hope or vision rather, that the Church of S. Pudentiana was rebuilt, built really for the first time, about the year 398 by those three Presbyters who have left a record of their work in the inscription of the apse. But the Church, thus a memorial of the first purely Christian art, has been restored again and again, in the eighth century, in the eleventh by Hildebrand, in the twelfth too and again

in 1597 by Cardinal Caetani who gave it its present form.

Descending the steps from the Via Urbana, and ignoring the modern painting of the façade, one finds oneself in a great grey nave, divided from the aisles by fourteen antique columns. There is little in those chapels which now fill the aisle to interest us at all; only in that to the left of the altar a well is shown where it is said the sisters S. Pudentiana and S. Praxedis collected the relics of more than three thousand martyrs who had suffered under Nero. What, however, really calls our attention after the first moment is the marvellously lovely mosaic of the apse, the most beautiful example in Rome of the work of that Renaissance of Christian art which followed on the death of Constantine. And here, indeed, we see, not as in S. Maria Maggiore, a work half Judaic, still in its essence of the third century, but an art altogether Christian in its intention and scarcely less classical in form than that of two centuries before—scarcely less classical, but assuredly less articulate and less perfect.

There, in the largeness of the apse, we see the Cross around which shine the great baroque beasts of the Apocalypse, the symbols of the Four Evangelists against a sky of a delicate prismatic radiance, classical certainly in its inspiration. Beautiful as it is, something has been lost since the time of the mosaics of S. Maria Maggiore.

In the centre, Christ as the Pantocrator, like some splendid Jupiter arrayed in azure and gold, is seated on a great Throne under that marvellous jewelled Cross against the rosy sky of dawn, His right hand

raised in blessing, in His left the Gospel. On either side His Throne two heroic figures seem to wait His word—the two churches *ex circumcissione* and *ex gentibus* with victors' crowns, in their hands raised aloft in prayer or praise.<sup>1</sup> Beside them stand S. Peter and S. Paul their representatives. For as Basil the Great wrote to the Emperor Julian 'in conformance with a practice dating from Apostolic times, representations of S. Peter and S. Paul are to be found in all the churches.' Beneath the throne are the figures of the Apostles, only ten of which remain. Above in the heavens appear the towers and porticoes of the Heavenly Jerusalem.

Looking on that mosaic one seems to understand that already in the fourth century everything has been decided. The primacy of the Roman Church, already asserted there, sets a seal on its sovereignty, in the majesty of its traditions, in the power of Roman art.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Some authorities suggest that these figures represent S. Pudentiana and S. Praxedis; cf. Crowe and Cavalcaselle, *A New History of Italian Painting* (Edit. Edward Hutton, 1908), vol. i. p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> S. Basilii *Opera* (Paris, 1839), vol. ii. (Epistolæ) 360.



## XII

### SANTI COSMA AND DAMIANO

IF Roman art from the second to the fifth century is magnificently represented by the mosaics of S. Maria Maggiore, S. Pudentiana and S. Sabina on the Aventine Hill, the wonderful mosaics of SS. Cosma and Damiano beside the Forum reveal to us better than any other work of art in Rome what the art of the sixth century had come to be in a City that was already on the morrow of a great disaster. The Goths and the Vandals had passed over her, the western Empire had fallen, there remained the centuries of her agony.

Composed as it is of a single nave divided not into aisles but into an upper and a lower church, the main part of the building is really the old Temple of Peace built by Vespasian, where, so we are told, the Archives of the City were kept. Destroyed, or almost destroyed, in the fire of 198 A.D., it was restored by Septimius Severus and Caracalla, who, placing there the great plan of Rome, called it *Templum Sacræ Urbis*. Then, after many years, came Maxentius, who in the fourth century, certainly before the Final Peace of the Church, built there a round temple to the memory of his son Romulus: it was these two buildings which, about two centuries later, Pope Felix IV. (526-530) threw into one building, the Temple of Romulus with

its four beautiful columns forming the vestibule of the church, towards the Forum, while the four-sided Temple of the Holy City became the church itself, a new chamber being then added which later became the sacristy, as it still is. The débris of time, the ruin of tumult and disaster little by little had raised the ground about the place, so that by 1623, when Urban VIII. sat on the throne of S. Peter, the church was almost subterranean. Thinking to remedy this without much trouble he strangely divided the church horizontally, building, indeed, a new floor halfway up the old walls. By the greatest good fortune, for Urban VIII. was a Barberini, so much more to be dreaded as we know than the Barbarians themselves, he left the main part of the mosaics in the tribune, work of the time of Felix IV., untouched, destroying, however, no doubt without a thought, the lower part of the mosaic wherein the twenty-four elders threw down their crowns at the feet of the Prince of Life.

In the great vault of the tribune, in the very sky itself, Christ stands, a sublime and melancholy figure, majestically and yet sweetly withal raising His right hand in blessing, while His left holds a scroll as it were of the fate of the City itself. Above, the hand of God the Father seems to guard Him, and at His feet, as it were, in a meadow of flowers S. Peter and S. Paul present S. Cosma and S. Damiano, those two barbarians, to Him. Beside them winds the river of crystal, and from the height of a palm-tree there, the phoenix, symbol, as Tertullian tells us, of the resurrection, takes its flight. Below, Pope Felix IV. and S. Theodore wait in adoration.

Decoratively magnificent as this mosaic is—and indeed just that might seem to be the chief business of mosaic work generally—it has not the concentration or the power, the essential contact with life of the work in S. Maria Maggiore. And indeed those mosaics have, rightly understood, less affinity with this which followed them in perfect succession than with the reliefs of the time of Marcus Aurelius and Septimius Severus, the Roman busts of the second and third centuries, as it were, their ancestors.

Here, in the church of SS. Cosma and Damiano, those clouds of an almost terrible fire and shadow are wholly symbolical, or, as one may think, merely decorative, and because of their beauty, their unnatural beauty, it is interesting to compare with them the absolutely natural and realistic loveliness of the clouds in the Abraham and Melchizedek, for instance, in S. Maria Maggiore, where the artist, altogether classical as he is, has really felt the beauty of a real Roman sky at sunset, with its fiery clouds and air heavy with purple and gold, and has expressed it once for all as well as he could.

As one looks at that solemn and melancholy Christ towering there, mysterious and almost threatening even in His forgiveness, or considers those two Arab martyrs, so rude and full of energy and fanaticism, we seem to understand the very emotion and soul of the time. The invasions of the fifth century had ended in the fall of the western Empire, and in the midst of that awful confusion, to save herself from the northern hordes, Rome—Italy—had passed, as a mere province, once more into the universal Empire; but the Emperor was a barbarian at Constantinople.

Yet what we seem to discern behind all that extraordinary hierarchical splendour, touched so strangely there in SS. Cosma and Damiano with a sort of fanaticism, is the spirit of Rome herself on the eve of centuries of calamity, on the morrow of a great disaster.

### XIII

#### S. MARIA ANTIQUA

THE subtle Byzantine soul which we may discern, though but half expressed as yet, in the mosaics of SS. Cosma and Damiano, seems really to have overwhelmed the City in the sixth and seventh centuries ; introducing into the simpler and perhaps less sensitive Roman spirit a whole new world of thought and experience, that, to our eyes, at any rate, never seems quite sane or reasonable, as though suddenly in the midst of our plain-song we had heard the throb of an incantation, the endless repetition of Asia, of the East. It brought new customs too ; among the rest the custom of building a Christian Church in a Temple of the Gods, as though a place once consecrated to divinity must needs be holy still, though as it were in a new cause. The first of those pagan temples to give place to a Christian church was the *Templum Sacræ Urbis*, in which, about 526, rose the basilica of SS. Cosma and Damiano, dedicated certainly to no Roman saint. Less than a century later the Pantheon passed into the hands of Mary Madonna, and about the same time the *Templum Divi Antonii et Divæ Faustinae* gave place to the Church of S. Lorenzo in Miranda, while in the Curia of Honorius S. Adriano rose. It was a Byzantine custom.

It must have been in this period, and certainly not before the sixth century, that the Church of S. Maria Antiqua in Foro was built in the precincts of the Templum Divi Augusti, probably in a part of the library, beside the Temple of the Dioscuri and the Temple of Vesta, the most sacred places of the ancient City. Its name—old S. Mary's, as we might say—remains a mystery, for it was certainly not the first church to bear her name in Rome, S. Maria Maggiore having been placed under her protection in the fifth century (432-440). The name seems indeed to be inexplicable, and though we know that its chief benefactor, Pope John VII., calls himself the servant of Mary, that helps us but little to explain it. Probably the church was a shrine for one of the ancient Byzantine images that later became not uncommon in Italy, taking its name from it.

Though Pope John VII. in the eighth century seems to have been the chief benefactor of the church, decorating it with frescoes, it was not bare before his time. Three layers of frescoes have been discovered, a new series, replacing those of John, having been painted in various parts of the building in 741-767. The history of the church, however, meagre as it is, is short, for in the time of Leo IV. (847-855) S. Maria Antiqua was crushed by the fall of part of the Imperial buildings, which overhung it on the north-west edge of the Palatine.<sup>1</sup> This calamity probably happened during the earthquake of 847. In consequence of it

<sup>1</sup> For these facts, as for everything connected with the Church that I know, I am indebted to Mr. G. M'N. Rushforth's masterly paper, 'S. Maria Antiqua' in *Papers of the British School at Rome*. (Macmillan, 1900). vol. i.

the diaconate was removed to S. Maria Nova, the church we now call S. Francesca Romana in the Temple of Venus and Rome. The outer hall of S. Maria Antiqua, however, escaping destruction as it did, seems to have remained in use till a much later period, as is proved by the fragments of painting it contains. The final destruction of the whole building, its burial under the débris, dates from the fire which devastated this part of Rome in 1084, when the Normans, under Robert Guiscard, came to deliver Gregory VII. out of the hands of Henry IV. Thus it remained, altogether hidden from sight and almost unsuspected, till it was discovered in 1900.

At the time of the foundation of S. Maria Antiqua, at the time of its decoration by Pope John, Rome was full of Greeks—Greek officials, Greek monks, Greek residents, as it were a whole Byzantine army of occupation. Everywhere in the church we see Greek inscriptions, costumes, and Saints, which serve to remind us that S. Maria Antiqua was, even structurally, connected with the Palatine, the seat of Byzantine government, that it was indeed on the edge of, if not within, the Greek quarter, whose centre was S. Maria in Cosmedin. And just as Rome in the seventh and eighth centuries was dependent on Constantinople, but already struggling, and successfully, for independence, so in the wall-paintings of S. Maria Antiqua we see a Byzantine art that has been transplanted to the west, that has acquired already something of a Roman character in consequence, in the use of a certain number of local saints, for instance, in the alternating of Latin with Greek inscriptions, and even in the general decorative treatment of the church.

S. Maria Antiqua is indeed a Byzantine church in process of transformation, about to become Roman. The plan is Byzantine, broken by Latin custom, the liturgical chambers on either side the altar having, in one case certainly, become chapels by the middle of the eighth century. Not important enough to be decorated with mosaics—all the more valuable to us on that account, for mosaics alone are a little meagre as evidence, and we already have more of them than of anything else of the time—S. Maria Antiqua shows us in what manner a whole church was decorated in that confused age.

The wall paintings in their subjects fall into two classes, namely, figures of saints and scenes illustrating a story. That array of Eastern saints, people altogether unknown to us, shows us very vividly how overwhelming the Byzantine influence had become in Rome. Yet, little by little, amid this crowd of aliens we see the figures we know so well appearing one by one—S. Gregory the Great, for instance, and Pope Martin I., the latter dead barely fifty years when he was painted there, the champions of Roman independence, of the dominion of the Roman Church in the West. There, too, we see S. Clement, who might seem to reconcile East and West under the sovereignty of Rome; but that figure certainly has been painted under the growing western influence, for he alone, against all Byzantine custom, appears with his emblem the anchor, the instrument, so his legend tells us, of his martyrdom.

It is difficult, however, and perhaps impossible to draw any really definite conclusions as to the state of Roman art from the work here in S. Maria Antiqua.



For we are ignorant as to who the artists were, whether Greek monks or Greek artists, merely settled, generation after generation perhaps, in Rome, or Romans indeed who had passed under the Byzantine yoke. That the paintings must be described as 'Byzantine' there can be no doubt, and though some few, especially in the sanctuary, have an unmistakable affinity with classical Roman art in types and the treatment of these types, in method, and technique, yet there is little in that to help us, for Byzantine, not less than Roman art itself, was but a continuation of the realistic traditions of that old Roman world. And indeed, if the means of expression were the same in east and west, so, largely, was the subject-matter: it was the spirit that was different. There, amid those crowds of strangers, strangers only because they were far off maybe, we see just our friends—Joseph in Egypt, David and Goliath, the Prophets, Madonna at Annunciation, the Magi, Jesus crucified, the Apostles, our Lord in glory. And then, like a vision almost, we come upon those two heads of so singular a beauty, to the right of the apse. Who can have painted them? It is as though suddenly in them 'this tyranny was overpast,' and we stood already in the dawn of some forgotten reconciliation and renaissance.

## XIV

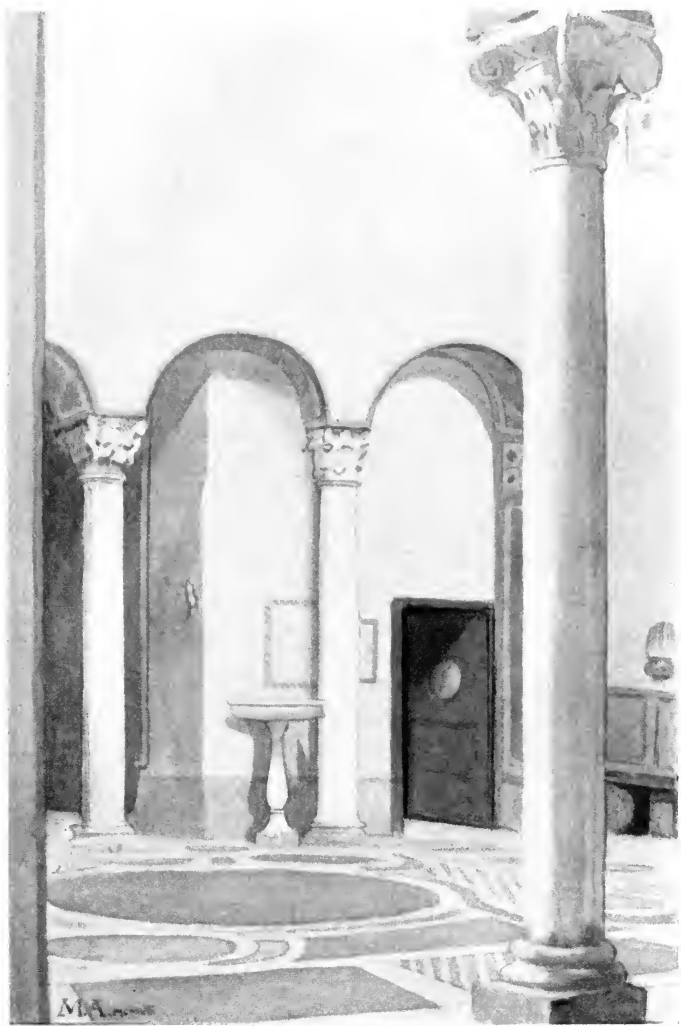
### S. MARIA IN COSMEDIN

OF that mysterious Greek world which during the sixth and seventh centuries had gradually overwhelmed the City, S. Maria in Cosmedin may well be said to have been the centre. Around it stood the Greek quarter, in which those Byzantine officials dwelt with others of their nation and Empire, forming indeed a world apart, really a sort of corporation or *Schola*.

Built, as was the custom of the Greeks, in the ruins of a pagan Temple, the Temple of Ceres, S. Maria in Schola Greca, as the Church was then called, stood in what, till our fathers' time, was the most picturesque quarter of Rome, in the shadow of the cypresses of the Palatine, within sound of the Tiber, close to the Ponte Rotta beside S. Maria del Sole, that tiny round pagan shrine on the Ripa Greca, and S. Maria Egiziana, small too, in which some have thought to find the Temple of the *Mater Matuta* the goddess of dawn, Stella Maris—star of the sea.

The date of its foundation is unknown, but, as we have seen, it cannot have been earlier than the sixth century<sup>1</sup> when, as we are told, it was numbered among the diaconatic churches of Rome. The Diaconia was the *domus* or residence of one of those seven deacons

<sup>1</sup> See *supra*, p. 126.



S. MARIA IN COSMEDIN



who presided over the seven ecclesiastical regions which divided the City. And, as though to remind us of its Greek origin, the street beside it still bears the name *Via della Greca*.

It was Adrian I. (771-795) who rebuilt the church, which then seems to have been ruinous, Rome having, in the agony we know, thrown off the Byzantine yoke but a few years before. It was he who changed the name from *S. Maria in Schola Greca* to *S. Maria in Cosmedin*, still as is thought conserving there some memory of its Byzantine nationality, giving it a name which later came to fit it perfectly—*S. Maria Splendida*, as we might say *Our Lady of Adorning*—*S. Maria κοσμίδιον*. But the people then, as now, would not have it so, calling it instead in their own tongue *Bocca della Verità*, because of the great marble Masque that we still see in the portico, and which in antiquity, as in the Middle Age, seems to have been used in matters concerning an oath; the merchants of old resorting to the well which it adorned, sacred to Mercury, of which Ovid speaks, to cleanse themselves as it were of perjury; while in the Middle Age, to prove they spoke truth, they thrust their hand in the mouth which suddenly made them prisoner, it was said, if they spoke falsely.

In the ninth century *S. Maria in Cosmedin* was again restored and a papal residence built beside it. Then in the troubles which followed the death of Charlemagne we lose sight of it, till, nearly three hundred years later, in 1133, we hear of a new restoration and even a consecration which speaks certainly of some unrecorded ruins due, perhaps, to Arnulf and his Germans, to Henry IV. after Canossa, or to Guiscard

and his Normans. It is to this time, to the twelfth century, that so much of the beautiful work still remaining here belongs, the beautiful mosaic pavement, for instance, spread like a rich carpet between the delicate columns, the high altar, the episcopal throne, work directed, with love and pride we may think, by Alfanus, Chamberlain to Calixtus II., since he has graven his name three times there within the church itself and is buried under the portico in a beautiful sarcophagus bearing this inscription *Alfanus, cernens quod cuncta pereunt, hoc sibi sarcophagium statuit, ne totus obiret*: Alfanus, knowing that all perishes, has caused this sarcophagus to be made for him that he may not altogether die. Was this what Christianity had come to in just a thousand years after the assurance of the catacombs, the new hope of the Church?

The two marble ambones decorated with mosaic, the beautiful twisted candelabrum there, with that in the tribune, the lovely canopy over the high altar, the ciborium, these are work of that period, the last being said to be from the hand of Deodatus Cosma, of the great family of Cosmati: but whoever Deodatus may have been he does not seem to have been of that clan. And indeed, beautiful as these twelfth-century works are, they might seem just an intrusion here in a church whose interest lies, for us, at any rate, in the eighth century in the time of Adrian I. perhaps, who restored it and gave it its present form, its beautiful tower and its name.

To that century, certainly, though to the reign of John VII. rather than of Adrian I. belongs that spoiled mosaic of the Adoration of the Magi, now in the Sacristy.

It belonged originally to the old Basilica of S. Pietro in Vaticano, is indeed just a fragment of the mosaics which adorned the oratory of John VII. in old S. Peter's; and though it has really nothing to do with S. Maria in Cosmedin, it belongs, as it were, to her period, the period of her splendour. For that eighth century, too, we may claim, and with a far greater significance, the majestic picture of the Blessed Virgin in a little chapel leading out of the nave in the south-west. *Θεοτόκῳ, ἀεὶ Παρθένῳ* we read there in shining letters—To the Ever Virgin Mother of God. Well, that might seem just a confession of a truth implicit in the Catholic religion as indeed it is, but in fact it is, as it were, a proclamation of the deliverance of Rome of the Latin world, of our world rightly understood, from the domination of Byzantium. About 750, as it seems, the Nestorian Heresy had again raised its head. Constantine V., the Iconoclast, had again forbidden us to pray to the Virgin on pain, as it is said, of death or exile worse than death. The Patriarch of Constantinople, seeking a compromise, seemed to hesitate. It was Rome who spoke, restoring to us of old our gods; our gods that in the desert of Judæa we seemed for a moment to have lost for ever. Looking back now across more than twenty centuries we can see still perhaps, though dimly, how superficial are the changes—of life, of religion, of art—that have befallen us. Yes, whatever our apostasies, our conversions may have been in theory, we have remained faithful with all our hearts to our first instincts of worship, our first perceptions of divinity. As those of the desert seeing but one changeless thing at dawn, at noon, and at evening, have

conceived of a Monotheism so securely that they easily became a prey to Islam, so we, looking on the woods, the streams, the valleys, and the hills, a host of idolaters from the first, if you will, essentially unchanged, have forged out of the religion of Jesus the dream of our hearts. It was Rome who achieved this miracle, refusing steadfastly to suppress the memory of the old ' times of ignorance ' and preserving our essential Polytheism in the permitted worship of the Saints ; and thus and thus Peter and Paul took the place of Romulus and Remus and out of the ruin of antiquity the Popes built the new Empire of the world. Here in S. Maria in Cosmedin we are reminded of that triumph.



## XV

### SANTA PRASSEDE

**B**UT there is no victory without price, and we may perhaps learn something of the cost of that new found independence if we examine the art of the ninth century which has so strangely forsaken life for the first time, it might seem, in Rome at any rate.

The church of S. Prassede on the Esquiline Hill, not far from S. Maria Maggiore, was one of the most ancient 'titular churches' in Rome. Said to have been built on the site of the house of S. Praxedis, the sister of S. Pudentiana, it would seem to have been founded really in Apostolic times, and we hear of it more than once before the end of the fifth century. In the beginning of the ninth century, however, it was in ruin—'The Church of the Blessed Martyr of Christ Praxedis which was built in the first times was now,' we read in the ninth century, 'altogether ruinous from age; so that Pope Paschal I., for the sake of his great reverence for that holy martyr of Christ, determined to rebuild it.' The church he built was, for the most part it seems, merely a replica of the ancient building, but he adorned it with mosaics very splendidly, and added three chapels—those of S. John Baptist, S. Zeno and S. Agnese with a monastery for a 'holy congregation of Greeks.' The chapel of

S. Agnese has in the course of centuries disappeared, and the monastery, after passing under Innocent III. into the hands of the Vallombrosan Order, is now a barracks, though it still houses a few monks with the soldiers. Nor has the church itself escaped the spoliation of the restorer. Restored in the sixteenth century by S. Carlo Borromeo with a lack of taste that might seem to go hand in hand with an abnormal moral sense, it became the appalling apparition we now see, only the mosaics and the beautiful *campanile* of the ninth century escaping the unfortunate enthusiasm of the author of the *Catechismus Romanus*. It is not, however, with the work of one so insane as to be altogether devoid of a sense of beauty that, happily, we are concerned, but with the work of the ninth century which, by an oversight surely, he permitted to remain.

These mosaics might seem almost to imitate tapestry, to be as contentedly just a decoration as though they were a rich carpet of figured stuff mysteriously closing the apse and hiding the mere stone of the great double arch of the tribune. Just a decoration without a sense of life, they would seem to look behind the art of Rome to some vague antiquity hidden in the East and brought hither still heavy with incense in some vague hierarchical splendour from Byzantium.

The mosaic of the apse, where we see a mournful Christ, His right hand raised in blessing, while on one side stands S. Paul with S. Prassede and S. Zeno, and on the other S. Peter with S. Pudentiana and Pope Paschal, is really but a copy of the great mosaic of SS. *Cosma and Damiano*, an adaptation of it accom-

plished without enthusiasm or emotion, just a church decoration without any but the feeblest purpose. It is as though with the departure of the Greeks, Rome, absorbed in her own fate, her political fate, had been able to do nothing but copy the work of her oppressors : not for another three hundred years would she dare to look back behind all her disasters to the art of antiquity and, as it were, hand in hand with an old beauty, return, yes, to Nature, in communion with which she was to recreate the art of Italy in the work of the Cavallini and the Roman school of the thirteenth century. Here, however, in S. Prassede there is no prophecy of the awakening. Consider, then, the mosaic on the face of the arch of the apsis, where the Lamb on the altar between the seven candlesticks is surrounded by angels and the symbols of the Evangelists, while beneath, in ever diminishing rows, we see the four-and-twenty elders of the Apocalypse, clad in flowing robes and bearing crowns in their veiled hands. It is as though curtains of figured arras had been caught aside above the altar to reveal the dim splendour of the apse itself. And it is the same with the mosaic of the triumphal arch. There, as in some mysterious tapestry, we see the New Jerusalem in the midst of which Christ stands, guarded by angels, to receive the homage of the Elders, while at the gates the saints invite certain chosen ones to enter in. Just as later some Norman artist is to tell the story of the Conquest in the tapestries of Bayeux, so here, but without that extraordinary sense of beauty or fitness which has there woven the material, the subject, the expression, and the form into beauty, the story of the heavenly vision in the Apocalypse is told really as one might

chant a canticle or a prose by heart after many years without enthusiasm : 'And I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away ; and there was no more sea. And I, John, saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven prepared as a bride adorned for her husband : . . . and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. . . .' Yes, it is into a world as mysterious as that, as unreal as that, a vision of the East, that we have not been able to understand in our literalness that we are come when we look on these mosaics of the ninth century in S. Prassede.

And as though to confirm us in our bewilderment, our uneasiness at a certain insincerity, as of things spoken by rote that have lost their meaning, there remains that obscure and mysterious chapel of S. Zeno, built by Pope Paschal I. in memory of the saint to receive the dust of his mother. *Orto del Paradiso* the Romans call the place, but it seems rather like the subterranean shrine of some regenerate Pluto. Amid an astonishing profusion of gold and splendid colour all sense of design is lost and it is really only with a vague sense of wonder we see those pale and burning figures shining there like ghosts, as amorphous certainly and with as little real relation to our world. In the arched window above the door is a double border of medallions, eight busts of saints, Christ in Benediction with apostles and saints, the Virgin and Child between two attendants. Within, above the arch on the left of the altar, are S. Agnese, S. Praxedis, S. Pudentiana, while beneath is the Lamb of the Apocalypse on the rock of the church guarded by the four beasts. Beneath

are busts of the Blessed Virgin, S. Prassede, S. Pudentiana and Theodora, the mother of the Pope. Above the arch, to the right of the altar, are S. James, S. Andrew and S. John ; while over the altar itself are the Madonna and Child between S. Prassede and S. Pudentiana. Above are Christ and the Apostles. Opposite the altar are the Apostles Peter and Paul guarding an empty throne. One lifts one's eyes from these mysterious splendours so full of uncertain and vague music to the roof where Christ reigns surrounded by four angels.

It is not here, however, for all their mystery and glancing gold and strange, beautiful colours we shall find any satisfaction or even recognise the work of Rome, of Europe. Some extraordinary madness, a real feebleness of expression seems to have fallen on the Eternal City, altogether absorbed, perhaps, in that age, in the tremendous politics which recreated Europe. What her wonderful gift of statesmanship which had just crowned Charlemagne and re-established the western Empire was to lead to, we may see, however, in the thirteenth-century tomb close by in the chapel of the Crucifix. There, with a nobility and beauty not to be surpassed, she seems to have given back to us all the beauty of antiquity with a new simplicity, a new tenderness and hope.

## XVI

### S. GIOVANNI IN LATERANO

LEGEND, eagerly busy for so long with the story of the conversion of the first Christian Emperor, Constantine the Apostate, has not hesitated to accord him also the honour of founding S. Giovanni in Laterano, the mother of all churches, both of the City and of the world. In the bitter pages of Zosimus we see him in 326, loaded with crime, steeped in the blood of his eldest son, his wife, his father-in-law, returning to Rome as it were in an agony of remorse seeking, well, reconciliation, most of all with his own heart, perhaps, and with the gods, but met always with the same answer, 'We have no means whereby a man may purge himself of parricide'; till at last, weary for peace, he met that strange Egyptian, a Christian from Spain—was it Asio, Bishop of Cordova?—who assured him that by Baptism all our sins are cancelled out. So Constantine forsook the gods, and ever after followed Jesus our Saviour. And as penance in expiation of those crimes he filled Rome with churches; with his own hands helping to dig the foundations of the two most famous among them—S. Giovanni in Laterano, and S. Pietro in Vaticano.

Full of inconsistencies, of impossible rumours, as that legend certainly is, it seems to have grown in the manner of legends out of a seed of truth; though the

seed is small indeed. For, in fact, the triumph of Christianity had been assured for nearly thirteen years when Constantine returned to Rome in 326, and the Lateran itself, the palace there, and the church assuredly had been in Christian hands, at any rate since the year 313, the year in which the Edict of Milan established the Peace of the Church, when in October Pope Miltiades held the first Council there against the Donatists. The palace, it seems, had belonged for some centuries to the Laterani, of whom Juvenal speaks; it had been confiscated in Nero's time, why we do not know, but restored by Septimius Severus. What interests us, however, in thinking of that story of Zosimus is the fact that it had become the property of Fausta, Constantine's wife, was indeed her dower-house, and that, whether as a gift from her or from the Emperor, in the earliest years of the fourth century it had become the palace of the Bishop of Rome.

Of the church, which, as we may suppose, stood within the house, we know nothing, save that it became the citadel of Roman Christianity, an honour it has never forfeited, for even to-day the Lateran takes precedence of all other churches of Christendom : *Omnium ecclesiarum Urbis et Orbis Mater et Caput*. Rumour, however, speaks of its marvellous treasures, among which were the Ark of the Covenant, the Tables of the Law, the Golden Candlestick and the vestments of Aaron, which Genseric stole; for the Vandals, unlike the Goths, had but little scruple where loot was concerned. Alaric, as we know, entering Rome by the Porta Salaria, amid the horror of his sack was careful of the treasures of the Church. When his Barbarians,

roaming through the City, came at last upon that 'splendid hoard of massy plate, of the richest materials curiously worked,' the great king bade them take it up—all of it. Then he marched them 'in order of battle through the principal streets, protected with glittering arms the long train of their companions, who bore aloft on their heads the sacred vessels of gold and silver . . .' and laid the treasure reverently in the sanctuary of the Vatican. That was in 410. In 455 Genseric entered Rome at the head of his Vandals by the Porta Ostia, and after a pillage of fourteen days left it, and, taking 'all that remained of public and private wealth, of sacred and profane treasure' to his galleys, set sail for Carthage. With him went the treasures of the Lateran, the spoil of the Temple of Jerusalem. When Belisarius took Carthage in 533 he found them all and carried them to Constantinople, where they remained, Procopius tells us, till Justinian sent them to Jerusalem to adorn the Church of the Holy Sepulchre; but they were lost in the sea.

Before those disastrous days of the fifth century the Lateran had been dedicated to Christ, *Christo Salvatori*, but after the spoliation of the Vandals Leo the Great was compelled to restore it, and it seems that then new titles were given to it, though it has indeed always remained under the dedication of Christ, *Christo Salvatori et in honorem S. Joannis Baptistæ et S. Joannis Evangelistæ*. It suffered, doubtless, in the awful sack of Totila and the bitter years which followed, and we find Adrian restoring it in the eighth century after Pepin had given him his protection, and it was Leo III., 'a priest of the Lateran,'



who crowned Charlemagne in S. Peter's on Christmas Day in the year 800. Ninety-six years later the Lateran was entirely destroyed by an earthquake—*ab altare usque ad portas cecidit*. Pope Sergius (904-911), rebuilt it on the old foundations and in the old dimensions. This building stood for four hundred years, till in 1308, on the night of May 3rd, it was totally destroyed by fire. Clement v. immediately began to rebuild it, the new church being finished by his successor, John XXII. (1316-34), who employed Giotto in its decoration. But misfortune still followed it, for in 1360 this building too was burned. Rebuilt by Urban v. (1362-70) there seems to have been, by that time, after two fires, but very little of the Sergian Basilica left. Urban's work remained almost unspoiled, though restored by Martin v. and Eugenius iv. in the fifteenth century, till in 1650 Innocent x. entirely rebuilt it, Borromini being the architect. It is this seventeenth-century church we now see; the façade, however, was erected under Clement XII. in the first part of the eighteenth century, and is the work of Alessandro Galilei.

Of the church of Urban v. very little remains to us, a part of the pavement, the tabernacle of the high altar, the cloisters and the mosaics: they but serve to show us what we have lost. Then a great atrium stood before the church surrounded by colonnades, in the midst of which a fountain played in accordance with ancient use. There were set the tombs of the Popes, John x., John XII., John XIV., Alexander II., and later, Martin v. The façade of that time, decorated with mosaics of Our Lord and the Four Evangelists, must have been, one may think, something like

that of S. Maria in Trastevere ; while on either side the great door stood the statues of S. Peter and S. Paul. Within, the church was divided into five naves by four lines of ancient columns, and the walls were covered with frescoes and mosaics. As to-day, one ascended a few steps into the transept, in the midst of which stood the high altar, the very table at which S. Peter was said to have celebrated Mass, and above rose the exquisite canopy of Giovanni di Stefano, which, though restored, we still possess.

Standing to-day before that immense façade of the eighteenth century, which, splendid though it be as an isolated work of art, has no relation at all to the church, is indeed a mere screen or frontispiece to it, we realise what we have lost. And yet the world there remains the same. One turns away from the church, as it were for consolation, to watch the shadows of the great clouds passing slowly over the Campagna, where in the immense silence the ruined aqueducts still stumble towards the City. It was with the remembrance of that vast solitude in my heart that I came at last into the vestibule of S. Giovanni in Laterano before the five doors of the nave, and, passing the statue of Constantine, entered the basilica. And indeed the test was too hard. My first impression, yes, in spite of a certain largeness, space, and majesty in the church, was of something lacking in simplicity. The infinite and artless detail, often vulgar enough, seemed to spoil the place—how shall I say it?—of a certain seriousness and nobility. One cannot deny the spaciousness of those five naves broken by a wide transept, beyond which rises the great tribune splendid with mosaics, nor the beauty and richness of the

soffitto roof, all of purple and gold ; but its dignity and repose are spoiled by the pretentious baroque statues, the ridiculous reliefs on the enormous pillars and pilasters which have hidden the ancient columns from our sight.

All those faults of taste, of modesty, might seem to be expressed to the utmost in the chapels of the nave, of which perhaps the Cappella dei Corsini in the north aisle, built by Galilei in 1704 for Pope Clement XII. in honour of his ancestor S. Andrea Corsini is the best example. There, too, the outlines, as it were the construction, are excellent and strong, the chapel being built in the form of a Greek cross in the manner of Bramante, but all that simple and noble beauty is spoiled by the decoration of it, that is assuredly the work of people not only without conviction, but without sincerity or peace.

So, little by little my visit resolved itself into a search for certain treasures that, as I knew, still remained there from one or other of the older basilicas : the fragment of fresco by Giotto on the first pilaster of the south aisle for instance, and the beautiful thirteenth-century monument to Cardinal Guissano, which I found close by, and those old sepulchres of the Popes scattered thereabout. And indeed there is a plenty of beautiful and ancient things there.

Passing up the few steps into the splendid transept beside the exquisite Gothic canopy over the high altar, one comes, at the northern end of the cross, upon four columns of gilded bronze which once upheld the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, but now adorn the Chapel of the Blessed Sacrament, in which is the supposed table of the Last Supper. Close by one enters the sacristy

by two beautiful doors of the twelfth century, and there, too, are some really surprising treasures—water-pipes of lead from the Palace of the Laterani, stamped with their name, an ancient bas-relief of the old basilica, a crucifix of the thirteenth century, and the two great statues of S. Peter and S. Paul which used to stand on either side of the portal of the church.

But all other treasures are as nothing beside the mosaic of the Tribune, which, restored though it be, remains in great part a fourth-century work, repaired by Fra Jacobus Torriti in the thirteenth century.

There, under a bust of our Lord, surrounded by a glory of angels singing among the clouds, above which God the Father shines like a sign in heaven, stands a great Cross, founded upon a rock, while above hovers the snow white Dove of the Holy Spirit, and below, about the rock at the foot of the Cross, two harts and four sheep bow their heads, while within, as it seems, an angel stands before the tomb of Jesus. On either side the Cross waits a group of saints: to the left the Blessed Virgin stands in the attitude of worship, her hands raised, while the tiny figure of Pope Nicholas iv. kneels, humbly clinging to her skirts. Behind him, as his guardian, S. Francis lifts his hands in prayer, while S. Peter and S. Paul come after, bearing scrolls. To the right of the Cross are S. John Baptist, S. John Evangelist, and S. Andrew, and behind S. John Baptist stands the tiny figure of S. Antonio. And at the feet of the saints flows a great river, on which cupids sail in little boats among the swans, while on the banks the peacocks strut among the flowers.

Much of this work, the beautiful head of Christ, for instance, might seem to be of the fourth century, so

fine it is and so close to the antique, in contrast with the figures of Nicholas iv., S. Francis, and S. Antonio, which are obviously of the thirteenth century and Fra Jacobus's own.

Very different in character and in style is the mosaic in the lower course. There, between the windows, parted asunder by trees, we see nine prophets, square, rude figures with heavy drapery. In the border to the left is a small figure of an old Franciscan with a compass and a rule; to the right a youthful figure, Franciscan too, with a hammer and a board in his hands. Beneath the latter we read FR. JACOB DE CAMERINO. . . . It may well be that this ruder mosaic was the work of the old unknown Franciscan, and that Jacobus de Camerino was his assistant. This carries us little farther, however, for we are quite ignorant as to who Fra Jacobus de Camerino may have been, though there was a Giacomo da Camerino among the painters of the Duomo of Orvieto in 1321; but in this mosaic we seem to have a work earlier than Torriti's restoration of 1290 above it, though very much later of course than the original work there.

It was for Nicholas iv. that Torriti restored the mosaics here in S. Giovanni, and ten years later Boniface viii., from a window under the portico of the basilica of Leo iv., proclaimed the jubilee of 1300. It is probable that both Dante and Giotto were present on the occasion as guests of the Pope, who desired the latter to paint the sides of the portico in memory of that fateful rejoicing. Five years later Clement v. fled to Avignon, and the Babylonian Captivity of the Church began. In the confusion and riot which followed, the portico of S. Giovanni was twice burnt

and damaged, and it is thus that, of all Giotto's work there, there remains to us but a single fragment, that on the first pilaster of the south aisle. Dimmed by age, cracked, and certainly retouched, this fragment yet remains one of the lovely things of the church. The Pope shows himself to the people, followed by three clerks, one of whom carries the Bull of Indulgence. When Giotto thus painted his portrait Boniface was in the height of his power, the Papacy seemed indeed the greatest power in Europe, and there was no other palace in Christendom that might compare with the Lateran.

quando Laterano

Alle cose mortali andò di sopra.<sup>1</sup>

The Papacy had killed the Empire : there followed the tragedy of Anagni, the long exile, and the shame of Avignon.

One passes out of the north aisle into the beautiful cloister which Vassallectus built in the thirteenth century ; but the monastery had been built in the sixth when in 589 the Lombards seized Monte Cassino, and the Benedictines of the mother house fled to Rome. They remained in possession till the end of the eighth century when the monastery was given to the Canons Regular of the Basilica. It was Leo I. who in 440 then caused the clergy of the Lateran to live in common under the rule of S. Augustine. They were reformed again in 1061, and in 1294 were expelled by Boniface VIII. to make room for secular clergy. After the long exile Eugenius IV. restored the monastery to them in 1442, naming them ' of the most Holy Saviour.'

<sup>1</sup> *Paradiso*, xxxi. 34.

Calixtus III., however, drove them out, and though they returned under Paul II., they were exiled again in 1471, and have never returned.

The Baptistery, S. Giovanni in Fonte, the Baptistery of Rome, as rightly understood, its old name, S. Giovanni ad Vestes, of the neophytes, seems to suggest, was of old approached through the ambulatory of the basilica and the atrium which Anastasius enclosed in 1153. In those days, as for nearly fourteen hundred years after, the façade faced the atrium, enclosing the vestibule of S. Venanzio with its two superb columns of the time of the Flavian Emperors, stolen from some Pagan building. To-day, however, owing to the enlargement of the apse of the basilica in the eighteenth century it is necessary to leave the church and to enter the Baptistery by the door in the Piazza.

An octagonal building, S. Giovanni in Fonte is upheld by eight great porphyry columns on which rests the architrave that supports eight smaller columns on which rests the lantern. Restored in the eighteenth century, these pillars were, as it is said, the gift of Constantine himself who, as the legend tells us, untruthfully it seems, was cured of a leprosy by Pope Sylvester, who washed him in the great vase of green basalt that is now the font. Whether that was a leprosy of soul or body we may not know, for others tell, and with no greater truthfulness, that the Emperor here became apostate, the Pope baptizing him in this very place.

But in truth, when Constantine left Rome for the last time in 327, it was still as a catechumen, having contrived always to postpone his christening with the excuse that he wished to be baptized in Jordan, till

he knew himself to be dying, ten years later, in Nicomedia. It was really on his deathbed that Constantine became a member of Christ's church. Any doubt that might entertain us concerning matters so weighty is dismissed by the fact that S. Giovanni in Fonte was only built in 435 by Pope Sixtus III. It was round this building that Pope Hilary (461-468) built three oratories, in thanksgiving for his escape out of the hands of Dioscoros and his followers at the Council of Ephesus. That on the east, dedicated to S. John Baptist, is closed to women on account of the sin of Salome. The Pope brought the bronze doors, it is said, from the Baths of Caracalla. That on the west is dedicated to S. John Evangelist. The doors date from the end of the twelfth century; the mosaics, the Lamb in the midst of a beautiful decoration of birds and flowers on a gold ground, are of the fifth century. The third oratory of Hilary, dedicated to the Holy Cross, has been altogether destroyed.

The Oratorio di S. Venanzio beside that of S. John Evangelist was dedicated and perhaps built by Pope John IV. (640-642) when he brought the saint's relics to Rome from Dalmatia. Its chief interest for us to-day lies in the mosaics of the fifth century within and about the Tribune. There in the midst under the arch we see the Blessed Virgin, a weary, spare figure in the ancient attitude of prayer, attended by S. Peter, S. Paul, S. John Baptist, S. Venanzio, S. Domnion of Salona and Pope John IV., who offers her a model of the oratory. Above in the arch is a huge bust of Christ between two angels, and on either side are the emblems of the evangelists, and two cities, the heavenly and the earthly Jerusalem



perhaps. Beneath each of these are the figures of four saints—S. Anastasius, S. Asterius, S. Telius, S. Paulinian on the right, S. Maurus, S. Settimius, S. Antiochianus and S. Cajanus on the left. The bust of the Saviour, the angels, and indeed all the figures within the apsis seem to be Roman and of an earlier period than those works on the front of the arch which surrounds them. The very names of these saints seem to protest their alien origin; while our eyes assure us that that careful delicate work so harmonious in colour and yet so lifeless never really came from the hands of a Roman, but owed everything to Byzantium, its contempt for life, its strange dream, as it were, of a dead glory smouldering on the wall, shining in secret out of the darkness.

This octagonal Baptistery, containing a circular building into which one descended to the font, came to be the pattern of all such buildings in Italy. There the Bishop, amid a ritual less simple than might seem necessary, officiated, in person for the most part, during the fifty days between Easter and Pentecost. In the earliest age the person seeking Baptism, almost always an adult, as we may believe, was first stripped naked in the midst of the assembly and then thrice immersed under the hands of the Bishop in the great bath or piscina prepared for the occasion. And that rite so touching and so humiliating was in truth just a means of escape. 'What dost thou ask of the Church of Christ?' the priest demanded. 'Faith,' answered the neophyte. 'What shall Faith give thee?' 'Life everlasting.' Then followed the Baptism of the Spirit—the laying on of hands.

That absolute nudity and humiliation of the

neophyte before the congregation soon passed away, laughed out of existence half in anger and half in ridicule by a world always suspicious of certain forms of insanity : and almost as soon as separate buildings were devoted to the rite, those chapels were built as here in S. Giovanni in Fonte, one on either side for men and women. Till the end of the fourth century certainly the Baptism of infants seems to have found many adversaries, but it had, as Tertullian tells us, been an universal custom even in the second century. But then the discretion of parents often suspended the Baptism of children till at least they could understand the efficacy of the rite : and even the catechumens were seldom impatient 'to assume the character of perfect and initiated Christians.' For the sacrament of Baptism gave an absolute pardon of all sin both original and personal, the soul instantly recovered her original purity and by the promises of Christ was entitled to a life eternal. Thus it came to be considered, how shall I say, imprudent, to use and so lose a rite so salutary and so irrefutable, one, too, that could by no means be repeated, or its consequences ever really recovered. People began to delay their Baptism till they lay on their deathbeds, after the manner of the apostate Emperor, and, assured of salvation by the magic of that rite at the last, were able to indulge themselves in the meanwhile in all the base enjoyments of the world. The Fathers thundered against it, but we find even S. Monica refusing out of her love to christen the little Augustine who seems to have summed up the pathetic humanity of this excuse in the immortal prayer, 'O God, make me chaste . . . but not yet.'

Some magic certainly in the minds of men hung about the Baptistery even in the fourteenth century, and not least about that great vase of green basalt here in S. Giovanni in Fonte in which, as men said, Constantine himself had been purged of his sins or at least healed of a foul disease by mere contact with that water under the hands of Pope Sylvester. Was it that which sent Cola di Rienzo to bathe there on the eve of his coronation? Who knows?

Clothed in a parti-coloured robe of velvet, lined with fur and embroidered with gold, crowned with a globe and cross of gold in which was a fragment of the true Wood, the sceptre 'of justice' in his hand, he led the procession on that first day of August 1347, all the way from the Capitol to the Lateran, amid the shouting of the people through the streets strewn with roses. Fifty guards with halberts surrounded him, a troop of horse preceded his march, with their drums and trumpets of silver, while over his head floated the great banner of the Republic on which was the Sun in the midst of a circle of stars, while above floated a dove holding an olive branch in its mouth. A band of Roman ladies attended his wife, and the ecclesiastic, civil and military orders followed him under their various banners. It was already evening when they came to the great church and palace 'of Constantine,' S. Giovanni in Laterano, where, from the hands of 'a venerable knight,' he was to receive the Order of the Holy Ghost. The first ceremony was the purification, the bath, and it was here, in S. Giovanni in Fonte, he took it in that venerable font the vase of green basalt, which, as he said later when accused of sacrilege, having been used by a pagan and that was Constantine,

could not be profaned by a pious Christian. No action of his life seems to have been so foolish as this, or to have so surely secured him the censure of that superstitious world. Yet he slept in the Baptistery all night, and on the morrow in the basilica 'at the hour of worship showed himself to the returning crowds in a majestic attitude with a robe of purple, his sword, and gilt spurs' and then summoned to his Tribunal Pope Clement who was in Avignon, and the Electors of Germany 'to inform us on what pretence they have usurped the unalienable right of the Roman people, the ancient and lawful sovereigns of the Empire.' There, fifteen days later, he was crowned *Tribunus Augustus* by the most eminent of the Roman clergy with the six crowns of oak, of ivy, of myrtle, of laurel, of olive, and of silver which, he believed, the ancient Tribunes used, and in his hand he held a globe of crystal, the emblem of the world. That was on August 15, 1347; exactly four months later, on December 15, in a burst of weeping, he abdicated the government, and a little later fled away to Naples.

That palace 'of Constantine,' to which Rienzi made his way on that memorable August evening, stood, as does the great building we now see, on the south side of the Lateran, only of old it included the *Scala Santa* and the chapel of S. Lorenzo at its head, then the Pope's private chapel, and, as it were, the *Sistina* of the Lateran. Built at the same time as the basilica, the great entrance and tower were added by Pope Zacharias in the eighth century, and there the Papal benedictions were given after an election. Thence a great staircase led to the midst of the buildings, a labyrinth

of rooms, chapels, and galleries much like the present palace of the Vatican. The most splendid chamber of all was the Banqueting Hall or Triclinium built for the reception of Charlemagne in the year 800. It was surrounded by ten apses and closed by a magnificent tribune. The Lateran was the true home of the Popes, till the exile in Avignon, and five general councils were held there, one in 1512. Then after the sack of 1527 it became ruinous and was altogether destroyed by Sixtus v. who employed Fontana to build the present palace in its place. So that all that is left to us of the old palace is the Scala Santa, that staircase of marble by which, according to tradition, Jesus went to face Pilate in the Pretorium, and the chapel of the Sancta Sanctorum at the top closed by a gilded screen: *Non est in toto sanctior orbe locus*—There is no place more holy in all the world. That beautiful chapel, graceful and delicate, was probably decorated by Jacobus, the son of Cosmas of the great clan of the Cosmati, and is, indeed, inscribed with his name, *Magister Cosmatus fecit hoc opus*, but it has been restored out of all recognition. Close by rises the great tribune which Clement XII. built in 1730 to receive that mosaic of the ninth century, once one of many in the Triclinium: but it was broken as it was being removed, and what we see to-day is merely a copy of the original work which celebrated the coronation of Charlemagne in S. Peter's Church on Christmas Day in the year 800. The great King appeared not in 'the simple dress of his country' but in the habit of a patrician of Rome. After Mass, Pope Leo 'suddenly placed a precious crown on his head, and the Roman people cried once more as of old, Long life and victory to Charles the most

pious Augustus crowned by God, the great and pacific Emperor of the Romans.' This act of the great Pope was a surprise to Charlemagne, who would have wished, it seems, to become Emperor in some other way—how, we know not ;<sup>1</sup> but the crowning of the Pope entrapped him. Consecrated by the royal unction, he swore to maintain the faith and privileges of the Church and offered rich presents at the shrine of the Apostle. Thus began the history of the Middle Age. The memory of antiquity had imposed itself on men, and, deceived by that strange dream, Dante is not ashamed to desire the salvation of Italy at the hands of a German.

Vieni a veder la tua Roma che piagne,  
Vedova sola e dì e notte chiama :  
Cesare mio, perchè non m'accompagne ?

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Gibbon, *Decline and Fall* (Ed. Bury, 1898), vol. v. p. 283 note, 98 ; and Bryce, *Holy Roman Empire*, cap. 5.

## XVII

### S. PAOLO FUORI LE MURA

**A**BOUT two miles beyond the Basilica of S. Paolo Fuori le Mura one comes upon the somewhat meagre buildings of a Trappist monastery, S. Paolo alle Tre Fontane, where, according to the tradition, S. Paul, by order of Nero, was beheaded on a little hill under a pine tree, his head striking the earth three times as it fell; and in each place a fountain welled up out of the soil, and was later enclosed in a little chapel. Those chapels, it seems, were all that marked the spot, till in the last years of the sixteenth century Cardinal Aldobrandini commissioned Giacomo della Porta to build a church there which was dedicated to S. Paolo—alle Tre Fontane. It was this church which came into the possession of the French Trappists in the middle of the nineteenth century.

But concerning S. Paul we learn that, being dead, Lucina took his body and buried it in her catacomb in the Via Ostia. In the persecutions which followed under Valerian in 258, fearing to lose the sacred relics, not of S. Paul alone but of S. Peter also, the Christians removed them secretly by night, the one from the cemetery of the Via Ostia, the other from the Vatican, and laid them side by side in the Catacomb *Platonica*, under the basilica of S. Sebastiano on the Appian Way. In

that act one seems to see already the supreme triumph of the Church, the reconciliation of the irreconcilable : of Peter and Paul, the new founders of the City.

The bodies of the two Apostles remained thus hidden together in the Catacombs, till, twelve years after the Edict of Milan, in 325, as it is said, another Lucina took them from their temporary resting-place and buried them once more in their own tombs, the one in the Vatican, the other beside the Via Ostia, not without a certain splendour and rejoicing, for, as it seems, Constantine the Apostate Emperor himself closed their sarcophagi and built a shrine or even a basilica in each place. And concerning this the *Liber Pontificalis* is very precise : *Fecit basilicam S. Paulo Apostolo cuius corpus recondidit in arca et conclusit sicuti Petri*—He made a basilica for S. Paul the Apostle, whose body he put back again in a chest and closed it, and so he did Peter's also.

It was not Constantine, however, who began the great basilica which for more than fourteen centuries stood over the tomb of S. Paul, but rather the three Emperors, Valentinian, Theodosius, and Arcadius, who began to build in 386, whose work was finished under Honorius and decorated by Galla Placida, daughter of Honorius and wife of Adolphus, King of the Goths. Spared by Alaric with all its treasures, as we know,<sup>1</sup> it doubtless suffered in the Vandal sack in 455 when Genseric entered the City by this road, nor may we suppose that Totila forgot it. In that disastrous century it was restored more than once ; but it seems to have suffered at the hands of the Lombards in 730,

<sup>1</sup> See p. 141.





THE ENGLISH CEMETERY



for we hear of Leo III. rebuilding it in the eighth century. These spoliations, if such indeed we may regard them, were as nothing to the destruction which followed at the hands of the Saracens in 846. All the country round Rome was overrun and depopulated in that most dreadful incursion. The City scarcely knew how to contain the swarms of monks and clergy fleeing from those ruthless heathen. 'Cities, fortresses, villages have perished with all their inhabitants,' Pope John VIII. wrote to Charles the Bald, begging his succour. 'The Bishops are dispersed; within the walls of Rome are collected the remains of the population, wholly destitute; without, all is devastation and desolation, nothing more remains to happen save—may God avert it—the ruin of the City. The whole Campagna is depopulated: nothing is left. . . . The neighbourhood of the City has been so utterly devastated that not a single inhabitant, man, woman, or child, is to be found.' In those heartbroken letters we seem to understand really for the first time what such an invasion meant.

But the Pope was by no means cowed. He stood for Europe. His activity was extraordinary; he built a fleet, he made treaties; but at last, owing to internal dissensions, ever the curse of Italy, he was compelled to purchase peace at the price of a yearly tribute of 25,000 silver *mancusi*. Then events compelled him to flee to France. He returned in 379, on the eve, as it proved, of victory, the victory of Cape Circe which shattered the forces of Mahomet. One of his first acts after that good news reached him was the building of a great wall round the Basilica of S. Paul, even as Leo IV. had built one round S. Peter's:

to the Leonine City he added Johannipolis.<sup>1</sup> That rocky hill not far from the basilica afforded an excellent support to his fortification, and was probably the site of his fortress. Everything, however, was destroyed, save the cloister of the church, in the great fire of 1823.

Of old, S. Paolo was bigger than S. Peter's, and in spite of restoration kept its primitive character till it was burned to the ground. Entering the new church that as closely as might be has followed the lines of the old, conscious though we are of a splendour of space, it leaves us cold : it is as though one had carefully rebuilt the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, carefully, omitting nothing. It is a monument, not a church, and I for one cannot imagine it ever being used for any Christian worship ; our prayers would be as out of place as the flowers among these hard shining marbles, this profusion of gold and crude splendour. Some few things certainly remain from the older building, the magnificent arch of the nave, for instance, supported by two Ionic columns, which Galla Placida built and decorated with mosaics in the fifth century, the tabernacle, the altar itself, and the cloisters. Restored though they be, these mosaics remain the most beautiful thing in the church, a masterpiece of the first half of the fifth century, yet with something not quite sane about it, as though Greek influence had begun to assert itself really only here as yet. Above in the midst, like some enormous vision,

<sup>1</sup> Muratori, *Dissertazioni* (Melano, 1751), tom. i. p. 421, tells us that Gregory IV. rebuilt the Città d'Ostia, and called it Gregoriopolis. He gives the inscription he found, which is our proof that John VIII. built Johannipolis. (*Dissertazione*, xxvi.).

Christ is seen at Benediction in a great nimbus of many colours. In heaven shine the symbols of the Evangelists, and below a vast company of saints and certain angels, beneath which are, on one side S. Peter, on the other S. Paul preaching.

That such a work as that moves us so little we eagerly explain to ourselves as the fault of the restorers. And we are eager to offer the same excuse for the Tabernacle of the high altar, which, graceful and charming though it be, seems in some way unworthy of Arnolfo di Cambio. But in truth the coldness, the indifference of that vast new church has much to answer for. Altogether out of accord with our age, when the one emotion with which Christianity may successfully appeal to us is its humility, a sort of eagerness and love, it seems altogether insincere and, as it were, beside the point, an imitation of something, noble and splendid enough, but to our minds mistaken, in which the Church expressed with a certain insolent joy the pride of temporal dominion rather than the beauty of holiness.

## XVIII

### S. MARIA MAGGIORE

THE greatest and most beautiful of Roman churches, S. Maria Maggiore, illustrates by its fine qualities, obscured though they be by the vandalism of Benedict XIV., the intention of all Latin architecture, its love of largeness, space, and light. If we examine the buildings of Antiquity, the Pantheon, for instance, or the Basilica of Constantine, beside the Italian work of the Middle Age, or the Renaissance in the Duomo of Pisa, or the Church of S. Maria della Consolazione at Todi we see at once that it is just those qualities of space, and light, an effect of space and largeness, contrived with infinite care and precision, with a sort of gift too for entertaining the sunshine, that all Latin architecture, ancient and modern, has in common. In all ages those have been the objects which the Latin builder has most desired, winning them from time to time by different means, coming nearest to a complete achievement perhaps in the Pantheon or the Church at Todi, and only half missing them after all, and then really by bad fortune, in the greatest church in Christendom, S. Pietro in Vaticano.

With its vast congregation, its worship in common, its appeal to the multitude, Christianity understood and certainly encouraged this desire so spontaneous

already in the Latin soul, modelling her churches, as it were, on the ancient basilica as convenient for a large multitude and refusing for centuries, not only from a religious motive, to use the temples, small as they were, and fitted after all for a worship rather individual than catholic. It was the Greeks who in the sixth century first built their churches in the temples of the Gods ; but long before that the Romans had begun to use the basilicas, places that might seem to have been designed especially for them : and of those which thus passed into Christian service S. Maria Maggiore is at once the oldest and the most splendid.

A whole literature and legend have grown up round the most beautiful church in Rome, the earliest too in the City to be placed under the protection of Mary Madonna, obscuring its origin as in a veil of flowers. There one hears much of Pope Liberius, who, just returned from Arianism, is said to have built it ; much of Sixtus III., who dedicated it to the Blessed Virgin, and, if we may believe the inscription still on the triumphal arch, decorated it with mosaics.<sup>1</sup> And while some speak of a fall of snow at midsummer which, as it is said, following on a dream, caused Pope Liberius to build the Church which for long was known as *S. Maria ad Nives*, others, apparently knowing nothing of this, call the place *Basilica Liberiana*. And, indeed, it is only of late that the true history of the building has been discovered, as though that criticism which has robbed us of so much that we thought we possessed were eager for once to assure us that here

<sup>1</sup> Cf. J. P. Richter and A. C. Taylor, *The Golden Age of Classic Christian Art* (Duckworth, 1902). This book is indispensable to any study of the mosaics of the Nave and Triumphal Arch.

at any rate we have something more ancient and precious than we had dared to believe.

In the *Liber Pontificalis* under the works of Pope Sixtus III. (432-440) it is written : *Hic fecit basilicam Sanctæ Mariæ, quæ ab antiquis Liberii cognominabatur* — 'here he made a Basilica for S. Mary, which of old was called of Liberius.' That was in the fifth century. Eighty years before, about 359, Pope Liberius, we are told : *Fecit basilicam nominis sui juxta macellum Livie* : 'made the basilica named after him near the market-place of Livia.' That word *fecit* used in both places might seem to bear twice over the same significance, relative that is and by no means absolute. We cannot depend on it in the earlier entry any more than in the later ; and just as Sixtus had merely added to or repaired an older building, so Liberius seems to have done. But what older building ? We know that the great secular *Basilica Sicinnii* stood on the Esquiline Hill, and both Pagan and Christian writers of the fourth century sometimes call S. Maria Maggiore *Basilica Sicinnii* just as they call it *Basilica Liberiana*. They speak of it too as being at about this time consecrated to Christian worship. It might seem probable therefore that Pope Liberius merely added a sanctuary to the old basilica, and this probability is confirmed not only by the tiles discovered in the roof but especially by the brickwork of the nave with its arched windows, easily seen from without, which recalls similar work of the time of Hadrian. Our conclusion is, then, that in S. Maria Maggiore we have a classical basilica which has become a Christian church. Thus those forty-two columns which uphold the roof are not, as is generally the



case, a mere collection of débris from other buildings, but actually a part of the original basilica, which indeed remained, until the eighteenth century, practically what it had always been ; and that it is now less simple and less beautiful than we might expect is the fault of Pope Benedict XIV. (1740-55) who restored it according to the miserable taste of his day.

All this, interesting and consoling as it is, becomes of really great importance when we begin to examine the mosaics of the Nave and Triumphal Arch, which, made, as we have been told, under Sixtus III. (432-440), still remain to us. After all we may well ask, if Sixtus did not build the church is it quite certain that he decorated it ? It is admitted that he dedicated it to Madonna : if, then, it is to him we owe the mosaics, why are they in no way concerned with Her ? And what are they concerned with ? Do they relate, as all the critics have assured us, just Bible histories ;—are they really stories from the Old Testament such as the frescoes in the Upper Church at Assisi tell of the life of S. Francis ? In fact they are not. They are not stories at all in the ordinary sense of the word ; they are rather didactic than narrative, mystical than evangelic, and they express not the theology of the fifth century but the mysticism of the second and third, of the age of the Apologists. They have nothing to do with the ideas of S. Augustine and S. Jerome (354-430), but are, indeed, an expression of the thoughts of Justin Martyr, of Clement of Rome, of Clement of Alexandria, of Origen, of the Shepherd of Hermas (91-253).

And, since this is so, we may well ask ourselves what they are doing in a church only dedicated to Christian

worship in the middle of the fourth century, for by then much of their teaching had become heretical or was forgotten. And that being so, they would seem stranger still as the work of Sixtus III. a century later, when indeed they can have had little meaning for any one.

It would seem, however, that the true explanation may be that these mosaics were designed in the end of the second century to decorate the wall of a Roman Palace belonging to a Christian Patrician,<sup>1</sup> for they deal with Christianity in a way that could offend no Pagan—God, the Gods certainly, being in heaven. In that, at least, Christianity was in agreement with her enemies, avoiding thus their most telling charge against her—so unthinkable by us—a charge of atheism.

So these mosaics remain to us, in spite of all restorations, the most beautiful as well as the most mysterious pictures in Rome, substantially works of the end of the second and the beginning of the third century, classical in tradition, in style, in means of expression; summing up for us very perfectly the ideas of the time, the dreams of the Apologists, the mysticism of Justin Martyr, the realism of the Gospel of James—symbols really, symbols of ideas, truths made visible. They do not tell a story but express, as it were, the mysteries of the Christian Faith. We see there, if nowhere else, that it was perfect in the heart of God, yes, from the beginning, and as witness of this mystery, the subject matter itself is typological or else, as most often, we have scenes in which the chief figure is a prototype of Christ. And at last we become aware that what is passing before us is not only the mystery of the Faith, but its history also, the history of that struggle between

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the frescoes in SS. Giovanni e Paolo on the Caelian Hill.

Europe and Asia in the heart of Christianity, between the Church of the Gentiles and the Church of the Jews; the words of Justin Martyr in his Dialogue with Trypho seem to repeat themselves over and over again: 'Leah is your people and congregation but Rachel is our Church for these and for the servants in both Christ serves even now.'<sup>1</sup>

The mosaics of the Nave fall into four groups, each gathered, as it were, about a notable figure of the Old Testament—Abraham, Jacob, Moses, and Joshua, with whom we are concerned, not as historical and sacred figures merely, but as prototypes of Christ. We see Abraham with Melchizedek (Genesis xiv. 18), and the bread and wine on the table, and Christ Himself, who appears in the sky, reminds us of the Eucharist. We see Abraham again entertaining those three strange visitors (Genesis xviii. 1. 2. 9. 13.)—are they three or one?—which reminds us of the mystery of the Trinity so obstinately opposed to the monotheism of the Jewish Christian. We see Abraham and Lot part asunder (Genesis xiii. 7), and are reminded of the parting of the Christian and the Judaic world. These pictures tell no story, they repeat the Faith, they have not the order of the Bible narrative and are careless of mere fact. Thus, in the story, the three Angels appeared to Abraham after the parting with Lot, which happened before the meeting with Melchizedek; the order is broken, and Isaac was not born when Lot and Abraham said farewell. But in that marvellous composition, perhaps the finest in the church, we see expressed the whole tragedy of Judaism, which, coming out of the desert, a stranger

<sup>1</sup> Justin Martyr, *Dial. with Trypho*, cap. 134.

to the Prince of Life, to the sweet variety of the world, must return to it again.

More particular in its symbolism the second series deals with Jacob, in whom, as it were, is hidden the Prince of Life who won first Leah and then Rachel the beloved for wife, and in whom later we see expressed, almost with the idyllic beauty of the Song of Songs, the Shepherd Bridegroom who leadeth his flock to a fresh pasture. In those nine double pictures, of which Jacob is the central figure, the whole mystery is hidden and expressed. But seven of them refer to any scene in the Old Testament, the last two being indeed wholly concerned with an expression of the meaning such a mystic as Justin Martyr had found in that fascinating story, for him, at least, charged with marvels. There we see the Shepherd Bridegroom pasturing his flock, which Rachel, 'our Church,' leads till Laban welcomes them; Leah, 'your synagogue,' is left in apprehension and foreboding. Then that shepherd chooses his work, the cure of souls, and his ward, the Church, and, claiming her, is married to her: yet Leah too has an honourable place, for she was Jacob's wife before Rachel.

Four pictures follow in which he chooses his flock, and then four more concerning Hamor and Shechem, and the sons of Leah (Genesis xxxiv. 6-20). While the third series, consisting to-day of thirteen pictures, the first being lost to us with seven others, takes Moses as the prototype, which merges at last into the equally long series in which Joshua appears as the exemplar of our Lord. It is as though the Church believed that Christ was already implicit in the Old Testament, and had proved it irrefutably.

Those pictures, so full as we may think of the various repetitions of the Psalms, lead, as the Psalms do in the Mass, in a procession of many windings, to Christ Himself. After the Prototypes we come to the Original ; but still not without mystery. Those eight pictures which on either side surround the throne of God, the keystone of the arch, still seek rather to express a truth than to tell a story. The scene of the Annunciation is not followed by the Nativity ; and the Annunciation itself is full of difficulty for minds so stained with realism as ours ; so far, perhaps, from reality. Is it the Annunciation merely or the whole mystery of the Virgin Birth that we see to the left of the keystone on the height of the arch ? Madonna, already a queen, attended by angels, passes her time as queens long since were used to do—how well we know it, since Homer has told us the very thing—in spinning, drawing a skein of scarlet wool carefully from a gilt wicker basket beside the throne on which she sits. And suddenly that angel falls from heaven like a snowflake out of the hands of God, whose Son presently will be hers also. Not far away Joseph waits disconsolate beside the temple, and to him too an angel comes with that tremendous explanation. Opposite on the other side we see as it were the Presentation in the Temple—the repudiation of Christ by the Jews, as the Gospel of James tells us. And then beneath the picture of the Virgin Birth we see the Adoration of the Magi, the homage of the East to the Dayspring from on high ; and under the Repudiation we come suddenly on that strange, delightful scene in which a Philosopher, surely Plato himself, leads a young man out of the city into the

country where Jesus is, a child still, who with Mary and Joseph comes to meet them. Beneath is the scene of the Magi before Herod and the Priests, and opposite to it the Massacre of the Innocents; and under these, the roots, as it were, of the whole theory or doctrine of the four series of mosaics on the arch and in the nave—Jerusalem, the home of Judaism, Bethlehem, the birthplace of Christianity.

In those mosaics one seems to have discovered a new world, in which Christianity appears innocent and still full of charm, and a certain wideness and serenity of outlook which one might find it hard to claim for her at any period of her life since then. A true daughter of light, of sweetness and light, she opposes herself only to the obscurantism of the Hebraic superstition, she accepts not only the art and beauty of the Pagan world, but its tolerance also of those who by other roads than hers have found the Prince of Life. How has she fallen since then we may learn perhaps from the mosaics of the apse, the work of Jacobus Torriti in 1295—on the other side of the Middle Age. Jesus truly, Madonna also, are little more than idols there, vast eikons, without form or any reasonable loveliness, vast symbols of something altogether out of relation to man, figments of the imagination seared by the lightnings of those disastrous centuries, more unreal than any god or goddess of the Greeks, since they resemble nothing in our world, and are indeed just signs in heaven without meaning or application. Yes, something has died in the heart of man in the years between these two achievements—was it humanism?—something has been born there—was it intolerance, that gift of

Asia, whose father was ignorance, whose mother was superstition? At least we must admit that life has been lost: life and a sense of its irrefutableness. Man no longer prays to God standing on his feet, unafraid, his hands raised in accustomed joy, but bowed to the earth in a dark corner before such idols as these.

Beneath this great mosaic, so strangely lovely in its decoration, Gaddo Gaddi, the Florentine, as it is said, with Filippo Rusutti about 1305 made the mosaics of the Life of the Virgin on the wall between the ogival windows. There we see not an expression of a truth, but a child's fairy-tale, exquisite, if you will, and full of the charm of such things, but without any serious meaning—the story of the foundation of the church on the spot where the snow fell at midsummer, as the Pope's dream had foretold him. Not far away, just outside the Baptistery, is the beautiful Gothic tomb of Cardinal Gonsalvo, Bishop of Albano. The work of Johannes Cosma, the son, perhaps, of Jacopo, it is the most beautiful monument in the church, and in itself a sign of that revival of art in the Eternal City which was due to the Cosmati, and which produced that great artist, Pietro Cavallini. The figure of the Cardinal lies robed as a bishop, while two angels lift the folds of the winding-sheet. Over the tomb hangs a cloth worked in mosaic, and above in a trefoil niche is a mosaic of Madonna with her little Son between S. Matthew and S. Martin. Close by is the monument which Sixtus v., by the hands of Sarzana, raised to Nicholas iv. And indeed the work of the Renaissance here is as lovely as that of the Middle Age: the roof, for instance, the work of

Giuliano and Antonio da Sangallo, seems not less splendid than the matchless pavement. But what are we to say of the celebrated chapels which hold the tombs of Sixtus v. and Paul v. ? One sees them with astonishment and passes on ; they have neither meaning nor beauty, being built in honour of two disastrous kings who had forgotten the meaning of their office in an extraordinary and vulgar splendour wholly barbarian, which has nothing to do with Christianity. No, such things are merely an excrescence that clings to the most beautiful church in the City really by chance, but cannot really spoil it, for its beauty was founded long and long ago, not without consideration of the sun and the largeness of the sky. That is the secret of the wonderful nobility which, in spite of every sort of restoration and vandalism, still inspires a place where, better than in any other church in the City, we may understand that Roman dream which came almost to nothing, that christening of the Empire which some implacable spirit inherent in everything Asiatic interpreted so unfortunately, gladly destroying the Empire for the sake of the Church, to our loss, to our gain, who knows ?



## XIX

### S. LORENZO FUORI LE MURA

THE basilica of S. Lorenzo, without the City, once so lonely and picturesque, is to-day almost surrounded by a modern suburb, so that you come to it no longer through the meadows of the Campagna, but between houses all the way, by the Via Tiburtina outside the Porta S. Lorenzo. The largest and most populous burial-ground of modern Rome, from the earliest ages there has been a cemetery in this spot, and it was there later they buried the second martyr of the Church, the first among the seven deacons of Rome, S. Lorenzo, whose heroic death had so profound an influence on the nobles of the City, so that of him particularly it came to be said, 'the blood of the Martyrs is the seed of the Church.'

It was there, so tradition assures us, that Constantine in his first enthusiasm, if that which was so politic may pass for sincerity of any sort, built one of the seven churches he is said to have founded in Rome. It was set literally in the midst of the old cemetery, and seems to have been little more than an enlargement of the church in the house of some early patrician convert. Then, in the fifth century, Sixtus III. built another basilica close by, these two buildings being united in the thirteenth century by Honorius III., who

threw down their apses and built one nave into the other. So the strange and picturesque church of S. Lorenzo was born, the Basilica of Constantine forming the Sanctuary, the Schola, and the Confession, of Sixtus III. the Nave with the entrance on the Via Tiburtina.

The Church of Sixtus III. thus united with that of Constantine, divided into three aisles by twenty-two antique, Ionic columns, was completely restored by Innocent IV. in 1245. The nave proper, covered by a magnificent wagon-roof spoiled by restorers, holds two precious and beautiful things of the thirteenth century : the pavement of *opus Alexandrinum* and the two ambones, that on the right the most beautiful work of the kind that has come down to us. Simple and severe, the nave contains nothing else that distracts our attention from its own strength and beauty. Very different, however, is the older part of the building, the great choir raised on high and reached by a flight of steps on either side, and the crypt, half visible, to which a third flight descends in the midst, and from which twelve great Corinthian columns, that may well be part of the original church of Constantine, rise to the roof bearing a frieze composed of antique fragments which sustains the beautiful colonnade that forms the tribune. There, on the Triumphal Arch of which this is the original front, shines a mosaic of the sixth century, altogether Byzantine in its strange and disconcerting beauty. Beneath this disastrous splendour is the beautiful thirteenth-century throne against the wall, studded with discs of porphyry and precious interlacing marbles. A splendid *soffitto* roof, all of purple and gold, a work of the early Renaissance, covers the choir.



THE SABINE HILLS



Descending to the crypt which contains all that is left to us of the half mythical church of Constantine, we find the tomb of Pio Nono, who sleeps there, a martyr among martyrs as he wished, close to the poor of the city lying in thousands in the cemetery round about. And, indeed, that the last sovereign pontiff should sleep among the poor is but another of those discords which Rome alone has known how to resolve, so that they form, as it were, the harmony of the City. Everywhere Rome has known how to reconcile things the most opposite, giving them something of her own genius for life that they may become part of her. It is in her heart alone that Paganism and Christianity have kissed one another and are friends, there old and new together have contrived a new beauty, growing up everywhere in that vast city of ruins—beauty a little bizarre, as with her it always has been, and not without a certain liking for barbarian arrangement. And as an example of her genius, that strange genius for reconciliation, that is to say, for government, consider this church of S. Lorenzo. The severe simplicity of the nave is married with an astonishing confidence that is genius, that compels our admiration at its success, with that rich and various choir, so that together they may form a church which thus is one of the strangest and loveliest harmonies in the City. There, too, discord has lost its violence and has been content to pass with a naïve freshness, altogether delightful, into the measure of her service.

## XX

### ST. PETER'S

ACCORDING to the tradition which S. Jerome followed, S. Peter came to Rome after his release from prison by the angel in Jerusalem about the year 42 A.D., in the time of the Emperor Claudius, and reigned there as Pope for twenty-five years. However that may be, his presence in Rome was unquestioned until the thirteenth century, when the Waldenses seem to have doubted it, chiefly because they could find no mention of it in the Acts of the Apostles or St. Paul's Epistles. That seems but a lame reason for denying it altogether, and indeed, maintained, as it was, by an unbroken tradition for more than twelve centuries, it is now no longer seriously questioned, though any details of the story of the Prince of the Apostles in the Eternal City must be received with the greatest caution. That he died there seems certain, for the time and place of his martyrdom, which took place after the great persecution by Nero in A.D. 64,<sup>1</sup> must have been well known to every one in the early church, and the writer of the Gospel of S. John certainly alludes to it in his last chapter.<sup>2</sup> Crucified as every one believes on the same day, but perhaps not in the same year, as S. Paul was beheaded, accord-

<sup>1</sup> St. Peter himself alludes to this in his 'Epistle from Babylon.'

<sup>2</sup> John xxi. 18, 19.

ing to the later but more general tradition, he was led, after many months in the Mamertine prison at the foot of the Capitol, with S. Paul along the Via Ostia so far as the little chapel which now marks the place of their farewell outside the Porta San Paolo, whence he was led back along the Triumphal Way to martyrdom in the Circus of Nero at the foot of Monte Vaticano.

As one comes to-day from Castel S. Angelo along the narrow Borgo Nuovo suddenly into the ordered splendour of the Piazza di S. Pietro, it is only with difficulty one can recall the atrocious drama that was acted there between the years 64 and 67 A.D., when Nero, having, as it was believed, burnt Rome to satisfy his ambition, wreaked the anger of the people on the Christians who, as he said, had caused the fire. Here too, as at the Colosseum, men were thrown to the beasts, women were exposed naked in the Arena, children were torn limb from limb, while the frightful spectacles of the Danaïdes and of Dirce were presented for the amusement of the Emperor's guests to illuminate a nocturnal feast. Our astonishment at the old cruelty of men to one another blinds us perhaps to the disheartening fact that the Popes even of our own time have been not less cruel than Nero, the Church of Christ not more merciful than the Emperor. To say nothing of the monsters of the Middle Age and the Renaissance, even in our fathers' time Shelley witnessed in this very place a sight as disgraceful to the Church as Nero's persecutions were to the Roman Empire. 'In the Square of S. Peter's,' he writes on the 6th April 1819, 'there are about three hundred fettered criminals at work, hoeing out the weeds that grow

between the stones of the pavement. Their legs are heavily ironed, and some are chained two by two. They sit in long rows hoeing out the weeds, dressed in parti-coloured clothes. Near them sit or saunter groups of soldiers, armed with loaded muskets. The iron discord of these innumerable chains clanks up into the sonorous air and produces, contrasted with the musical dashing of the fountains, and the deep azure beauty of the sky, and the magnificence of the architecture around, a conflict of sensations allied to madness. . . .'

Close by the Circus of Nero in the old days was a cemetery, and there the body of S. Peter was laid after his crucifixion. Later, Pope Anacletus, as it is said, built a monument over the grave wherein he too hoped to lie, for the Apostle had ordained him presbyter. Then in A.D. 258, the year of the Valerian persecution, the bodies both of S. Peter and S. Paul were carried secretly into the catacomb beneath the Church of S. Sebastian. There they remained till Pope Dionysius (258-268) restored them to their original resting-places. Then after the final peace, Constantine as it is said built over their tombs the two basilicas of S. Peter and S. Paul.

To build the church here by the Vatican Hill, Constantine destroyed the Circus of Nero, using it indeed as the foundation for the great shrine of the Apostle. Old S. Peter's, thus founded on the ruins of Nero's Circus, was a church of pure basilical form, with a wide atrium some two hundred and twelve by two hundred and thirty-five feet, closed by doors and reached by a great flight of thirty-five steps, which the pilgrims, Charlemagne, as one hears, among them,



ascended on their knees. In the atrium, booths were set up for the sale of candles, ornaments, and flowers; even food, figs, and such were sold there for the needs of the pilgrims. There, too, many of the most illustrious princes of the earlier centuries were buried; among those of our own race who lay there were Conrad of Mercia, Offa of Essex, who took the cowl, and Cadwalla of Wessex, who, as Bede tells us, 'forsook all for the love of God.' In the midst was a great fountain formed from the pine-cone that crowned once the mausoleum of Hadrian.

On the great platform without the atrium the Popes were used to meet the Emperors, whom they led thence into the sanctuary for their Coronation before the tomb of the Apostle.

Bronze doors flanked by columns divided the platform from the atrium, and five other doors opened thence into the Church. The door in the midst was the *Porta Argentea*, decorated in silver in the sixth century, and inscribed later with the names of the cities Charlemagne bestowed upon S. Peter. To the right were the *Porta Romana*, which was reserved for women, and the *Porta Guidonea* for the pilgrims, who, then as now, were led from church to church by a guide. On the left were the *Porta Ravennati* and the *Porta Giudizia* for the dead. Beside these was a smaller door, *Porta Anticha*, which owing to its smallness was closed by Sixtus IV., who built the *Porta Santa*, which, like the *Porta Anticha*, was opened only for the Jubilee.

Old S. Peter's itself consisted of five naves divided by four rows of antique columns. The pavement was of white marble taken from the Circus, which was

later gradually replaced by more precious materials. At the end of the great nave was the tribune, covered with mosaics, separated from the nave by a triumphal arch, on which was the great mosaic of S. Peter presenting Constantine to our Lord : in his hand the Emperor held a model of the Church. Across the arch lay a huge beam blazoned with the Cross of Christ and the keys of S. Peter, and under hung the great lamp called Pharos, which the Saracens stole in 846 : it had thirteen hundred lights and was lighted only at Christmas, Easter, and the Feast of S. Peter and S. Paul.

The Confession before the Tribune, reached as to-day by two flights of marble steps, was lighted by silver lamps and was paved with silver, while on a beam of gold stood the silver statues of the twelve Apostles. The shrine, whose panels were painted by Giotto,—his work is still preserved in the sacristy,—was overwhelmed with the most precious offerings, and was indeed the richest in Europe. And indeed everywhere within, the church was glorious with mosaic. The façade too was covered with mosaics, and the basilica was roofed with gilt bronze tiles taken from the temple of Venus and Rome.

Beside the atrium stood the Baptistery, built by Pope Damasus and fed with water from Monte Vaticano. It held the Chair of S. Peter, which to-day, horribly exalted, stands over its own altar in the apse of the new church. Not far away stood the bell-tower covered with silver and gold.

To protect these enormous riches, Leo IV. surrounded the whole quarter which gradually grew up round the church with a fortified wall, built by slaves, as John

vii. did for S. Paolo Fuori. This city, in which was the old Borgo—Borgo Saxonum—where we dwelt and where the Kings of Wessex built a church, was known as the Leonine City.

That wall might save old S. Peter's from the invader, but was powerless against the Popes themselves, who, vandals as they have ever been, were never guilty of an act more barbarous than the destruction of the most famous church in Christendom, one thousand one hundred and fifty years old at the time Nicholas v. pulled it down in order to build—well the beautiful and sumptuous failure we see, which, though it has been too much decried, is in fact without a sense of reverence. It is a little blatant in its pride and a stranger to humility. It seems to praise God in the language one might use to a king for the sake of impressing the populace : but not sincerely.

New S. Peter's was begun by Nicholas v. in 1450, and it was consecrated a hundred and seventy-six years later by Urban VIII., some twelve architects having been employed upon it. The first of these was Rossellino, a Florentine, who conceived so huge a church in the form of a Latin Cross that the choir and transepts alone would have enclosed old S. Peter's. In 1455, however, Nicholas v. died, and his successor, Calixtus III., was not of the Renaissance. He did little or nothing to the building, while Pius II., who came after him, was too busy in the Romagna and with the Turkish business to be able to devote either time or money to it. When he died the walls were only a few feet high : and Paul II., who succeeded him, was a reactionary. Sixtus IV. and Alexander VI. were dreaming of their own personal glory, but Julius

II., not less selfishly ambitious, continued the work Nicholas v. had begun, placing it in 1506 in the hands of Bramante ; yet at first he too eyed it with suspicion, fearing it might outshine his own tomb, already wonderful in his heart. Bramante began all over again, making a design in the form of a Greek Cross under a dome. When he died in 1514, so unfortunately for the church, he had done but little towards the fulfilment of his design. Then Raphael was appointed architect. He made a new plan, but dying in 1520, achieved nothing. The work passed into the hands of Baldassare Peruzzi, but when Leo x. died not long after very little had been accomplished. On the death of Peruzzi, Antonio Sangallo was appointed in 1536. He but spoiled Bramante's plan, according to Michelangelo, to whom at his death in 1546 the work passed, Giulio Romano having first been appointed, only to die in the same year.

Michelangelo was already seventy years old when he became capo-maestro. Refusing all payment, he worked, he said, 'for the love of God, the Blessed Virgin, and S. Peter.' Bound though he was by the plans and achievements of his predecessors, he was able to discard the design of Sangallo, which, besides filling the church with darkness would have involved the destruction of the Sistine chapel. He took up again the plan of Bramante, a Greek Cross under a dome. 'I will throw the Pantheon there up into the sky,' he is reported to have said. Every effort was made by the disciples of Sangallo and Giulio Romano to displace him, but the Pope not only confirmed him in his office, but gave him even greater power than before. When he died in 1564 he had finished the



*Photo. Bregi*

CASTEL S. ANGELO



drum and made the plans for the dome which Giacomo della Porta finished in 1590. It remains the only perfectly beautiful part of the church.

In 1640 della Porta died, and Paul v. appointed Carlo Maderna architect. At the order of the Pope he abandoned both Bramante's and Michelangelo's designs, adopting Rossellino's, namely a Latin Cross ; for it had become necessary to impress the North with that long nave at the head of which the altar might gleam and the faithful be edified. Thus it is after all, in some sort, to Martin Luther we owe the present form of S. Peter's Church : while the change of those plans which Michelangelo had laboured for seventeen years to make irrefutable, turned what might have been one of the most beautiful churches in the world into something a little vulgar, a little insincere perhaps, and merely ostentatious.

Maderna finished the façade in 1614. Fifty-three years later Bernini completed the Piazza with its beautiful colonnades and fountains, and in the end of the eighteenth century Pius vi. built the sacristy.

Thus was completed the work undertaken by Nicholas v., but at an expense of more than ten millions sterling, and at the cost of dividing Christian Europe into two hostile worlds. For, as all the world knows, it was the sale of indulgences to build S. Peter's, a sale pushed so eagerly by Tetzels, that caused the great scandal which gave life to the religious movement in central and northern Europe called the Reformation.

Standing in the Piazza di S. Pietro to-day with the beautiful fountains and colonnades of Bernini on

either hand, while in the midst rises the obelisk that once stood in Nero's Circus, and is perhaps the oldest thing in Rome, one gazes ever with new astonishment at Maderna's façade, over which in huge letters is written the name and title of Pope Paul v. Borghese. That frontispiece seems to have gathered together in itself all the faults of a feeble and faulty school. The heavy engaged columns, the windows as of a palace, the strange upper story which has no relation at all to the church, all this poor invention and bad taste are not only ugly in themselves but they obscure altogether the very real beauty and splendour of the church, the great dome of Michelangelo which is only less great and wonderful than that of S. Maria del Fiore herself. It is then, with an ever growing sense of disappointment, that one passes up that wide flight of steps to the great central door where are the gates of bronze which Eugenius iv., in the earliest Renaissance, caused Filarete to make, in envy of the Eastern doors of the Baptistery at Florence, that Ghiberti had just set up when the Pope was so ignominiously chased out of Rome. Filarete finished his work in 1445, and what surprises us most in his work is not that it is mere prose beside Ghiberti's poetry, but that the artist should thus early have borne witness there to the immortality of the gods, yes, here in Rome on the threshold of the greatest church in Christendom. For, carved side by side with our Lord, the Blessed Virgin and the twelve Apostles, we see not merely the great secular business of the Papacy, the Council of Ferrara, the Coronation of the Emperor Sigismund and such, but the most voluptuous scenes of the old mythology, Venus in the arms of Mars, Europa raped by the Bull,



Leda caressing the swan, Jupiter and Ganymede. That the Church should have permitted this honour to be paid to her ancient enemies, above all in this place, remains a matter of profound astonishment and, indeed, lends an interest to the work of Filarete which it would not otherwise possess, for it has no other merit.

You enter the church at last, disappointed already, and remain, well, uneasy, disconcerted ; perhaps because it is not at all what you expected. The largeness seems to be lost in the richness of the ornament, and then nothing is so feeble as largeness if it be not ordered and contrived with beauty. The Parthenon, the Pantheon even, impress us more with their majesty, their true greatness. Beside them, S. Peter's seems vulgar in a compromise between beauty and ostentation. It is as though here alone one had tried to please both God and the multitude ; to impress the one and dominate the other. The whole place is blasphemous in the confusion of its intention. It is not Greek, nor Latin, but Barbarian, and what beauty it has, and it has much, is by reason of that confusion a barbarian beauty, fundamentally insane and romantic. The richness of the material is lost in the largeness of the church, the precious stones in a multitude of riches. One's attention wanders, nothing there can hold it. The place is less a church than a city in whose streets one may wander all day long searching in vain for God. It is without reserve, a strumpet among churches ; it offers itself to every passer by, it has no secret beauty, it flaunts its sumptuousness in your face in all the pride of a physical splendour that is unacquainted with the soul. And just

as you would not go to such a woman as I have named for consolation or in time of trouble, but rather in an hour of joy, so you would not go to S. Peter's to pray. Indeed one sees very little attempt at it—a few people kneel before the tomb of the Apostle, but they soon go away from the gaudy richness of that multitude of golden lamps before the barbarously twisted bronze of the baldachino stolen from the Pantheon by the Barbarian, who was so well named Barberini. Many go there to kiss the foot of the great image of S. Peter, but they pass along to bow before no shrine, to worship at no altar, but to wander about as in a great city, cool in summer, warm in winter, where it is impossible to think of God since man is so insistent and so proud there.

But with its faults of construction, of insincerity, and perhaps most of all of taste, S. Peter's has beauty and to spare: the great physical splendour of which, I have spoken. I say nothing of the ornament, the decoration which is often crude enough; yet which, in this great place, often loses something of its brutality. The fat cupids, each as big as a giant, which one is not likely to mistake for cherubim, seem here less ugly than in fact they are, less impossible than they would be in any other church in Christendom. Nor shall I speak of the work of Bernini: though one can imagine few things more distressing than the bronze decoration he has made for the chair of S. Peter, high up over the altar in the tribune, its position in this immense church saves it from the full weight of its ugliness and ostentation. While as for the baldacchino of the high altar which he made for Urban VIII. out of the bronze stolen by that barbarian from the Pantheon, one can even admire the justness of its proportions

in regard to the church, and though it seems altogether strange and lacking in repose, it is perhaps in sympathy with the building in which it stands. And then one would not willingly seek out these details which the largeness of the church hides so well. One finds oneself saying that almost everywhere here. There is but little painting to call for our attention, the beautiful panels of Giotto, the Angels of Melozzo da Forlì in the sacristy—almost nothing else ; but the mosaics, those extraordinary imitations of pictures which abound, were surely never meant as works of art. Even the 'Navicella' of Giotto over the great door of the vestibule has been spoiled till one tries not to look at it.

Certain things precious or beautiful, however, amid so much that is proud and insincere, by chance remain. By chance—one is sure that it is only by chance or superstition that they have been suffered to stay here. Of these the earliest is the great bronze image said to be a statue of S. Peter, which stands against the south-west pillar of the four which support the dome, in each of which is preserved a precious relic—a piece of the True Cross, the Spear of S. Longinus, the Head of S. Andrew, the Handkerchief of S. Veronica. There, in that bronze statue, whatever its age may be, it is probably of the fourth century, we have something full of meaning and sincerity, an extraordinary hieratical figure, severe and holy, which compels our reverence. It remains here not for its own sake, for its beauty, but because for ages men have been used to worship it with a kiss, while all the other monuments of the old church, the beautiful works of the Middle Age and the early Renaissance, have been swept away into the crypt under the choir.

There, in the shadow and silence, the pagan sarcophagi still hold the dust of the mediæval Popes—Gregory v., for instance, Adrian iv. the Englishman, Boniface viii., whom Giotto painted and Dante saw face to face; these and the rest. There, too, are the fragments of the beautiful tomb Mino da Fiesole made for Paul ii. Yet the church itself, that great nave with its immense chapels, each bigger than a parish church, is not altogether without monuments of real merit, for in its sculpture, rather than in any other of its details or ornaments, S. Peter's redeems itself.

Among the earliest tombs there, are those which Antonio Pollaiuolo made to hold the dust of the assassin Sixtus iv., the dust of Innocent viii. Sixtus iv. lies in the Chapel of the Blessed Sacrament in the tomb which his successor caused to be made for him, and in which Julius ii. was, in spite of himself, as it were, to lie at last. Stretched on the great sarcophagus, Sixtus iv. himself seems to sleep vested in the full regal pontificals of the priest king, the triple crown on the head, the chasuble and the pallium upon the shoulders. In the extraordinarily vivid face so restlessly at rest, Pollaiuolo the realist has allowed us to see even yet all the eager and determined ambition which did not hesitate to use the very presence of the Prince of Peace as an opportunity for murder. Surrounded by beautiful women masquerading as the Arts or the Virtues theological, Sixtus remains in our minds as Pollaiuolo has shown him to us, a child of the Renaissance, without an elementary moral sense, but with a great love of the Arts, the patron of Botticelli, Perugino, Signorelli, and Michelangelo. It is strange that so much of his immortality should be due to the

citizens of that city which he tried so grievously to injure.

We find Pollaiuolo's really great work again in the tomb of Innocent VIII., a wall tomb in the north aisle opposite that lofty niche where each Pope is laid for a year after his death, and where Leo XIII. still sleeps in safety from the Roman populace. Above the tomb Pollaiuolo has set a great seated figure of the Pope, which in its careful and delicate realism is not less wonderful than that of Sixtus. Here too he has carved statues of women, but with less self-consciousness.

This strong and spirited art of Florence, of the Tuscan realists, passes at last into absolute beauty only perhaps, here at any rate, in the early work of Michelangelo, of which S. Peter's holds the most precious example. The Madonna della Pietà, in the first chapel of the south aisle, remains the most beautiful as it is the most perfect of the many works which came from that strong and ruthless hand, so marvellously tender for once. It was carved for the Cardinal di San Dionigi, called the Cardinal Rovano, not long after the Bacchus of the Bargello of Florence. Madonna is seated on the stone where the Cross was raised, her dead Son in her lap. 'He is of so great and so rare a beauty,' says Condivi, 'that no one beholds Him but is moved to pity. It is a figure truly worthy of the humanity which belonged to the Son of God and to such a Mother; nevertheless, some there be who complain that the Mother is too young compared to the Son. One day as I was talking to Michelangelo of this objection: "Do you know," he said, "that chaste women retain their fresh looks much longer than those who are not chaste? How much more,

therefore, a virgin in whom not even the least unchaste desire ever arose? And I tell you, moreover, that such freshness and flower of youth besides being maintained in her by natural causes, may possibly have been ordained by the Divine Power to prove to the world the virginity and perpetual purity of the Mother. It was not necessary in the Son; but rather the contrary; wishing to show that the Son of God took upon Himself a true human body, subject to all the ills of man, excepting only sin; He did not allow the divinity in Him to hold back the humanity, but let it run its course and obey its laws, as was proved in His appointed time. Do not wonder then that I have, for all these reasons, made the most Holy Virgin, Mother of God, a great deal younger in comparison with her Son than she is usually represented. To the Son I have allotted His full age." ' Michelangelo was about twenty-four or twenty-five years old when he finished that work. It brought him fame and a great reputation, and there, alone in all his work, on the hem of Mary's robe he has carved his name.

The work of Michelangelo, so disastrous to his disciples, might seem to have been understood, with a certain fineness and success for once, by Guglielmo della Porta, who built and carved the tomb of Paul III. which Cardinal Alessandro Farnese ordered in 1550. The bronze statue of the Pope, splendid in the energy of its pose, vested in the cope and pallium, the right hand raised in benediction, is seated above the tomb. Beneath, two figures, Prudence and Justice, half sit, half lie in the manner of the figures of the Medici tombs in Florence. Prudence, as one might suppose, is repre-



*Photo. Alinari*

STUART MONUMENT IN S. PETER'S, ROME





sented as a veiled matron. Imposing and modest, she holds a book or a mirror in her hands, gazing only at herself, as it were, on her own soul. The Justice, however, is radiant and lovely, altogether desirable, her beautiful head full of provocation, her splendid and supple body, half naked once, stretched luxuriously, yes, beside the dead. It was Cardinal Edoardo Farnese who, with all the beastly modesty of the Catholic reaction which has spoiled the Church ever since and led her into I know not what devious ways, obliged the son of Guglielmo della Porta to clothe the Justice in the impossible chemise of lead that we see to-day. This at least should have involved the Papacy suddenly so shamefaced in the universal laughter of the world, the immense ridicule which is the fate of all hypocrisies. The statue which the Church has thus proclaimed a strumpet, but has not banished from S. Peter's, was long said to be a portrait of Julia Farnese, the sister of Paul III., famous as Giulia Bella, 'Sposa di Cristo,' mistress that is of Alexander VI.; but the hard facts of time refuse us the consolation of believing that we see her there as she was; for when Guglielmo carved the statue, Giulia Bella had been dead more than thirty years.

Opposite, on the other side of the tribune, is the tomb of Urban VIII., the Barbarian Barberini who made Pasquino so merry. Bernini and his pupils made it on the same plan as the tomb of Paul III., but with how much less sincerity. The whole work is a mere exhibition of virtuosity, of a sort of craftsmanship empty of life which has remained with us ever since. That figure of death might seem indeed to represent more than the artist intended, to express

not only the death of a Pope, but the end of the Renaissance. The Reformation had penetrated into Italy leaving, like an invisible pestilence, nothing living behind it save that hospital in which the Catholic reaction was born.

Something of the old humanity stirred now and then certainly in spite of the tyranny of an emasculated Church, in the work of Canova for instance, to be found here not only in the beautiful architectural work of the tomb of Clement XIII., but especially in that exquisite monument which commemorates the last of that unfortunate race which once ruled in merry England and with whose passing, with the advent of the Dutchman, the continuance of the German, she is merry no more. Yes, the most touching and human monument after all in the great church commemorates a tragedy of our race, the passing of the Stuarts, reminding us of the rightful kings of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, James III., Charles III., and Henry IX., Cardinal York. Their ashes lie in the crypt, and this monument, where two English boys weep beside a tomb, was erected by that royal blackguard George IV., who, having all his life played the part of Pimp and Pander to our English kings, tried to deceive the world with a sentimentality and an hypocrisy truly German by erecting this monument to one of those he and his wretched alien race had so unfortunately supplanted. And though for nothing else, yet for this, S. Peter's Church should have the love and respect of Englishmen, since it gave a refuge to those kings of our race to whom we denied even the solace of a last resting-place in English earth.

## XXI

### THE VATICAN

THE Palace of the Vatican as we see it to-day is not really a palace at all, a building at unity with itself, but rather a group of palaces, chapels, galleries and courts built at different periods added one by one since the early part of the thirteenth century, and joined the one to the other by staircases and covered ways. Its prototype is not to be found in any palace in the world but rather in the Imperial buildings on the Palatine Hill which, growing up under successive Emperors little by little, came to form a whole, which, almost shapeless as it was, must have been rather picturesque than beautiful. Nor is this comparison so far fetched as it might seem. The Palaces of the Vatican, like the palaces of the Cæsars long ago, form the largest, and in many ways, the most splendid building in the world, containing some seven thousand chambers, a multitude of courts and over two hundred staircases.<sup>1</sup>

When the first palace was founded on the Vatican Hill remains a mystery. Tradition asserts that it was in the time of Constantine; and certainly at the end of the fifth century Pope Symmachus seems

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Pistolesi, *Il Vaticano descritto ed illustrato*, 8 vols. (Roma, 1829-38); Stevenson and Ehrle, *Affreschi del Appartamento Borgia al Vaticano* (Roma, 1897).

to have restored some building beside S. Peter's, and at any rate by the year of Charlemagne's Coronation a palace of some sort was standing on the Vatican, for Pope Leo III. escaped thither from his prison in 798, and, as some say, there the great king resided before his Coronation on Christmas Day 800.

When Leo entrenched the Borgo and created the *Città Leonina*, the Vatican became a fortress with S. Peter's as its citadel, till the fire during the siege of Frederic Barbarossa in 1167: and thirty years later we hear of the restoration, and new buildings begun by Innocent III. and finished by Nicholas III. in 1277; but until the Babylonish Captivity the Popes resided at the Lateran, the Vatican being indeed but a kind of stronghold. Its true history, amid much that is vague and uncertain, begins in the last quarter of the fourteenth century when Gregory XI., led by S. Catherine, having ventured back from Avignon, chose to live here because of its nearness to Castel S. Angelo, John XXIII., his true successor, building the covered way along the wall of Leo from the palace to the fortress. In the dreadful years which followed—the years of the Great Schism—the palace seems to have fallen into utter decay, and we find Martin V. (1417-1431) living in the Colonna palace near SS. Apostoli, as the Romans tried to force his successor Eugenius IV. (1431-1447) to do, when he refused, stoning him down the Tiber so that he was compelled to take refuge on a pirate's ship and sail for Pisa and Florence. Eugenius was an exile for the greater part of his pontificate and seems never to have lived at the Vatican, but his successor, Nicholas V. the humanist, the first of the Renaissance Popes, rebuilt the palace

on a great scale before he began the work on the new church of S. Peter, which we also owe to him. It was he who built all that part of the present palace which stands about the Cortile del Páppagallo, including the so-called Borgia wings. His successor, Pius II., was too busy with the unruly barons of Romagna and with the Turk to concern himself either with the work on S. Peter's or with new plans at the Vatican. The next additions were made by Paul II. who built the Palazzo della Camera, by Sixtus IV., who built the Sistine Chapel, by Innocent VIII., who built the Palazzo named after him, and the Belvedere in the gardens which the buildings of Julius II. surrounded, and by Alexander VI., who added the Torre Borgia, the Sala Regia, and the Sala Ducale, towards S. Peter's. All the work of Paul II. and the palace of Innocent VIII. perished to make room for the new church of S. Peter; the rest of the work contrived there in the fifteenth century remains.

Julius II. built those two long wings which brought the Belvedere of Innocent into the palace itself in the early years of the sixteenth century. Then Leo X. built the Cortile di Damaso, so named because the water which supplied the Baptistery, built by Pope Damasus, passed through it, while Sixtus V. built the library and the apartments now used by the Pope. The last work of any consequence undertaken at the Vatican we owe to Pius VII. (1800-23), who built the magnificent galleries of the Braccio Nuovo.

Thus the Palace of the Vatican, as we now see it, is the work of some three hundred and fifty years. In its first days it was a fortress, in its last—but who dares say its last?—it has become a prison, from

which the vicegerent of God dare not venture out lest the mob should kill him in the insecure streets of Rome. Is this one of Time's revenges? But who shall say when the vengeance shall be itself avenged?

#### I. THE CHAPEL OF NICHOLAS V

Amid all the dying pomp of the Vatican, the Oratory of Nicholas v. stands like a little country chapel, as simple as that, and gay as it were with the wildflowers of Tuscany. Of all the sanctuaries of the Eternal City, it alone keeps about it something of the mysticism and charm of the earliest Renaissance—of S. Francis, for instance. After the material splendours of S. Peter's, the cold magnificence of the great palace of the Popes, it offers you a marvellous repose, in which it is possible to forget even the papacy and to pray to God. And, indeed, in all the Vatican it alone is a place of perfect happiness, full of sweetness and light. One finds there nothing of Roman sombreness and solemnity, but, as it were, an intimate silence and joy. And to cross its threshold unexpectedly in the midst of this immense ghostly palace, so full of unreal and material things, is to come suddenly out of a dream into the sanctuary of home.

The work of two Tuscans, Nicholas v. and Fra Angelico, one might expect, perhaps, to find there something of the simplicity and happiness that clings even to-day about every Tuscan church even in Florence; but it is a more intimate delight we find in this oratory, which seems to express best of all not only the youthful and innocent spirit of the Renaissance which was born in Tuscany, but the very

thoughts concerning it of its two most characteristic protagonists—the gracious and beautiful spirit of Nicholas v. and the passionate and human genius of the greatest artist of his time, Beato Angelico.

Nicholas v., the first patron of the new learning, of the new spirit to ascend the pontifical throne, was born in Pisa of poor parents in 1398. Owing to some political misfortune his father, who died when he was about nine years old, left Pisa for Sarzana in the Lunigiana soon after the birth of his second son Filippo, later Cardinal of Bologna. There his childhood was spent in some poverty with his mother, Andreola, who, however, gave him a good education and warned, as Vespasiano da Bisticci tells us, in a dream of his future eminence, not only urged him to pursue his studies, but sent him when he was sixteen to the university of Bologna where he became ‘learned in all the seven liberal arts.’<sup>1</sup> He spent two years at Bologna and then, lacking money, he returned home, but his mother by then had married again, and finding that neither she nor her husband was very rich he went to Florence determined to pursue his studies by means of teaching. There he met Messer Rinaldo degli Albizzi, who engaged him to instruct his sons, and when Rinaldo was exiled he entered the service of Messer Palla Strozzi, so that at the end of two years he had gained enough to return to Bologna. Thus his life began. In Florence he met all those patrons and artists in whose hands lay the future of Europe. He helped Cosimo to form his library, and became the friend and secretary of Niccolò degli Alberghetti, Bishop

<sup>1</sup> For a full account and résumé of Vespasiano's life, see my *Florence and Northern Tuscany* (Methuen, 1907), pp. 60-62.

of Bologna, who, when Martin v. made him Cardinal, took him with him to Rome. Thence he went with his patron, whom he loved as a second father, into France and England on political business. He remained with Albergati for twenty years, and on his death in 1443 entered the service of Cardinal Landriani, who died however in the same year. Famous throughout Italy for his learning, the friend of scholars, and a collector of manuscripts, he was presently made Bishop of Bologna by Eugenius iv. and sent as Papal Legate into Germany. He got so little, however, out of his bishopric, for Bologna was at war with the Holy See, that he was compelled to borrow money from the Medici, Cosimo giving him a general letter of credit to all his correspondents. His embassy was so successful that in 1446 Eugenius gave him the hat, and a few months afterwards he found himself Pope, taking out of gratitude to his early patron, Niccolò degli Albergati, the title of Nicholas v. Pacific, without political ambition, his reign was remarkable chiefly for his protection of the new learning, his splendid patronage of learning and the arts, his destruction of old S. Peter's, his plans for the great Church of Rossellino, and his work at the Vatican. He was not maybe without pedantry, but he was the first Pope who preferred scholars and artists to monks and friars. He secured for the Renaissance the allegiance of the Church. It was the irony of circumstance that he should die in a moment of misfortune just after the fall of Constantinople.

Great as were his services rather to humanity than to the Church, the work of such a man is easy to forget, and indeed in all Rome there is only this little



chapel in the Vatican which vividly reminds us of him.

It was in 1445 that Pope Eugenius had invited Fra Giovanni da Fiesole to Rome, where he remained till, Eugenius dying in 1447, Nicholas v. besought him to decorate the new chapel he was building at the Vatican. Illustrious throughout Italy, Angelico appeared to the Pope, Vasari tells us, 'a person of most holy life, as he really was, gentle and modest, so that when the Archbishopric of Florence became vacant he offered him the preferment, but Angelico entreated his Holiness to provide himself with some other person since he did not feel capable of ruling men.' It was on his recommendation that Frate Antonino was appointed. A Dominican, one of the first to enter that order at S. Domenico at Fiesole, Angelico was the greatest painter of his day in Italy. Early a traveller, during the dispute as to the proprietary rights in the convent, he visited Foligno and Cortona, returning to Fiesole in 1418. But all central Italy was known to him later; with his pupil, Benozzo Gozzoli, he painted in Perugia and Orvieto, and seems to have wandered all over Umbria. He was sixty-two years old when Nicholas invited him to paint in his study at the Vatican, which was later transformed into the chapel we know.

There on the walls Angelico has painted the life and death of SS. Stephen and Laurence. In the lunette to the right as one faces the window, we see the Ordination of S. Stephen. He kneels, his head newly shaved, before the altar, while S. Peter presents to him the cup and platter of the Communion, and behind, the 'multitude of the disciples,' called together for the occasion, watch while the new deacon is

ordained. S. Stephen had been appointed to minister to the widows of the Grecian Jews, and in the second fresco we see him preaching to them while they sit on the ground even as the women do to-day in southern Italy or Spain, enthralled by the sweetness of his eloquence, their emotions touched, as women's are, by the beauty of words. In the background the men are assembled; less moved than the women, they seem to argue, as men will, concerning the matter of the sermon. In the lunette on the left are the two scenes of the saint's martyrdom. In the first he is seized at the city gate by certain Jews, Paul among them. In the second he kneels on the hillside, caught, as it were, in the arms of God, heedless of the stones that fall so thick about him. But one among the murderers—is it Paul again?—holds his stone listlessly, as it were in doubt, clutching his robe in his left hand, as though, moved by that rapt figure, he found some undreamt-of misgiving suddenly in his heart.

Beneath these wonderful paintings, Angelico has told in fresco the story of S. Laurence. In the first we see the Pope Sixtus, masquerading as Nicholas v., ordaining him, even as S. Peter had ordained Stephen. In the second, the same Pope gives the treasures of the Church into his keeping, while the soldiers stand ready to arrest him. In the third, S. Laurence, standing in the portico of some basilica, surrounded by women and children, distributes alms to the poor, the halt, and the blind. In the fourth we see him before the Emperor Decius, who sits under an arch upheld by pilasters from which a beautiful tapestry is hung. Without we see the trees and the blue sky; while the saint in the power of a soldier waits patiently, his hands bound, for

the sentence of his judge. Instruments of torture already lie on the ground, and later, as we see, he is led away to die, blessing his gaoler as he goes to that awful death which Angelico painted there on the right, but which is completely spoiled.

As one looks at these living and exquisite pictures, the work of an old man of sixty-three, one is chiefly struck, I think, by their freshness, as though the influence of Rome had revealed to a mind, enclosed till then in a country cloister among the wildflowers, the realities of the world, of life, that contemporary life which was about to become so splendid. The gentle friar, who has dreamed his life away among the saints and has walked hand in hand with Jesus, as it were, has become, under the influence of the Eternal City, the most perfect and the most satisfying of naturalists, not copying life but creating it, out of a profound realisation of it. Some joy always secretly in his heart has led him, suddenly so observant of men, to just this realism, as we might say, which is so new and so charming a feature of his work here in the Vatican. Consider then that woman who in the ministration of S. Stephen, lightly, lightly holds her child's hand, oblivious of everything but the emotion which the saint's words have suddenly awakened in her heart: or that blind man, who, when S. Laurence distributes alms, approaches with so uncertain a step, one hand stretched out before him, the other holding firmly, blindly to the friendly staff: it is as though we had really seen these people, so surely has Angelico drawn them from the mere details of life, of life in the Eternal City. How well they must have loved one another, those two, the Pope who was the greatest

humanist in Italy, an eager archæologist, a lover of all beautiful things, and the artist who had, long and long ago, mistaken earth for heaven in his joy at its perfection, only to find here at last, it might seem, that it was in some sort the only truth he might really apprehend.

## II. THE APPARTAMENTO BORGIA

The Appartamento Borgia, situated as it is under the Stanze of Raphael, looking on the one side into the court of the Belvedere, and on the other into the Cortile del Pappagallo, formed part of the palace which Nicholas v. had built in great part, but had died too soon to complete. It was Alexander vi. who finished the work begun by Nicholas, adding the tower named after him which became so famous. It was in these rooms, decorated for his delight by Pintoricchio, that Alexander spent the splendid disastrous days of his pontificate. Here in a strange and almost fabulous luxury he lived for eleven years, half fearful under the eyes of Cesare his son, forgetting everything in the beauty of Giulia Farnese, the terrible but exquisite mystery of her mouth, the wonder of her golden hair. It was here, too, that he died at last after that fatal dinner with Cardinal Adriano of Corneto. Cesare Borgia, the wonder of the world, occupied the vast apartment on the second floor, which was later decorated by Raphael, and is known to us as the Stanze di Raffaele.

After the death of Alexander vi., the Appartamento Borgia was abandoned to the nephews of Julius ii., the Pope discarding it in his hatred of the Borgia

House. Then when Sixtus v. built his new palace it was deserted, till in 1527 it was used as a sort of *caserne* by the rabble of de Bourbon. Infinite damage was done at that time, but not more than in the seventeenth century, when two conclaves were held there, the walls and frescoes being ruthlessly spoiled by the erection of cells for the Cardinals. Gradually the apartment, a favourite with no one but its builder, came into the hands of servants. Later, in the time of Pius vi., these were turned out, the spoiled frescoes were painted over, and the place was used as a picture gallery, then as a museum and library. Its present rehabilitation we owe to Leo XIII., who set about restoring it in 1891, when the library was removed. It was not, however, till 1897 that the whole apartment, consisting of six rooms, the two last belonging to the tower, was accessible, the frescoes having been uncovered and carefully restored, and the whole place set in order.

It was in the first days of his pontificate that Alexander vi. set Pintoricchio to work on the decoration of these rooms, which he was able to occupy about two years later, in 1495. In the three years that had then passed since his election in 1492 the five inner rooms had been painted by Pintoricchio and his assistants, the outer room, the Sala dei Pontifici, by which we enter the apartment to-day, being painted later under Leo x. by Perin del Vaga.

Pintoricchio's work, the work which he at least designed, begins in the Sala della Vita della Madonna, where we see certain of the joyful and sorrowful mysteries of the Blessed Virgin: the Annunciation, the Nativity, the Adoration of the Magi, the Resurrection,

the Ascension, the Descent of the Holy Spirit, and the Assumption. Above on the ceiling are the Evangelists and Fathers. The second room, *Sala dei Santi*, is decorated with scenes from the lives of SS. Susanna, Sebastian, Barbara, Antony Abbot, and Paul the Hermit; an exquisite Madonna and Child, and S. Catherine disputing with the Philosophers. In the third room, *Sala degli Arti*, are allegorical figures of Geometry, Arithmetic, Music, Rhetoric, and Grammar, while over the door is a tondo of Madonna and Child. In the fourth room are the Prophets, and in the fifth the Sibyls. Side by side with these Christian scenes and figures are set incidents from older religions, such as the stories of Isis and Osiris, of Juno and Io. While scattered everywhere are flowers and fruits, birds, sphinxes, and hydras, interwoven with the bull of the Borgia.

But what is most interesting to us perhaps in all this gay and decorative work is the fact that it is full of portraits. In the fresco of the Resurrection, for instance, Alexander himself kneels before the newly risen Christ, while we may see all the pontifical court of the day in the dispute of S. Catherine. It is Cesare Borgia who appears as the Emperor Maximus, while Lucrezia herself, the sweetest and most tranquil of women, then about fifteen years old, and on the eve of her marriage with Giovanni Sforza, the young man in a red cloak in the right-hand corner of the picture, appears as S. Catherine. Among the many Oriental personages in the same picture we may identify two certainly; for the prince who stands close to the throne and is dressed in a purple cloak is Andrea Paleologus, Lord of Morea, who had just lost

by the death of his uncle, Constantine XIII., the crown of Byzantium : while the other wearing a splendid turban, standing on the Emperor's left, is Djem, the brother of the Sultan Bajazet, and the inseparable companion of Cesare.

According to Vasari, 'Over the door of one of the rooms Pintoricchio portrayed the Signora Giulia Farnese in the face of a Madonna ; and in the same picture is a figure in adoration of the Virgin, the head being a portrait of Pope Alexander.' Vasari, however, seems to have confused these frescoes with the picture now in Valencia, where a donor, perhaps Alexander VI., kneels before Madonna. In these rooms, as we have seen, the Pope kneels, the triple tiara on the ground beside him, before the risen Christ ; while the only Madonna here which seems to be a portrait is the tondo over the door of the Sala dei Santi, where she holds her little Son in her arms as He reads from a book of hours. May we see in that pale and exquisite face as true and realistic a portrait of Giulia Farnese 'Sposa di Cristo' as we have of Alexander in the kneeling figure of the 'Resurrection'? That delicate, voluptuous mouth was made, one might think, rather for kisses than for prayers, that golden hair, a veritable fleece of gold, which she would unbind and let fall so that it covered her even to her feet, and as the Florentine ambassador said, made her in truth a sun—*Parava da vero un sole*—scarcely hides itself under the half transparent veil. It may well be that this is the divine Giulia Bella whom the Pope so loved, that even in the company of Lucrezia she might not leave Rome for a single night without his express permission. If it be, we have in these rooms portraits of the chief personages of that

reign, Cesare himself that tongue of fire as we have seen masquerading as the Emperor. A contemporary medal in the British Museum if need be confirms the portrait as his.

### III. THE SISTINE CHAPEL

To pass from the chapel of Nicholas v., from the Appartamento Borgia even, into the Sistine Chapel, is to realise what in Rome at any rate the Renaissance had become little by little in the first half of the sixteenth century. In that strange secular place man is so omnipotent that there is no room for God. Built for Sixtus iv. by the Florentine Baccio Pintelli about the year 1473, the Sistine Chapel is a great oblong building with a vaulted ceiling, a hundred and forty-seven feet long by fifty wide, the pavement being of fine mosaic work in the manner of the Cosmati. Divided into two parts by a beautiful screen of marble, the work of Mino da Fiesole and Giovanni Dalmata, it is surrounded by a marble bench set against the wall, while within the screen is a tribune for singers, a *cantastoria*, a grave and noble work which, spoiled as it has been by gilding, remains for the most part of the fifteenth century.

This plain and simple building, round the lowest course of which Raphael's tapestries were to have hung where now we see a painted curtain, is lighted by twelve narrow windows set high in the walls under round arches. Beneath these windows, like a frieze, are set the famous frescoes by painters of the fifteenth century, those on the right being scenes from the life of Christ,



those on the left scenes from the life of Moses ; the prophecy, as it were, and the fulfilment facing each other in that narrow room, but without any real significance. No, the problem that we see triumphantly solved in the Sistine Chapel and yet with a sort of failure after all had nothing to do with the doctrine or faith of the Church. It was rather a question of æsthetics than of theology which presented itself to that master, whoever he may have been, who directed the famous company of artists Sixtus IV. had brought together to decorate his private chapel. Who that master was we do not know, but many facts in that scheme of decoration seem to suggest the name of Perugino.<sup>1</sup> An Umbrian whose immense reputation was greater at that time than that of any other artist who has worked here, he was certainly accompanied by an assistant whose work appears there, while he himself began the series somewhat as Giotto had done in the upper church at Assisi. Those three frescoes by Perugino which Michelangelo destroyed at the bidding of Pope Clement VII. to make

<sup>1</sup> Vasari affirms that the general direction was in the hands of Botticelli. However that may be, a contract dated the 27th October 1481 gives us the names of the artists employed here. There were three Florentines, Cosimo Rosselli, Botticelli, Ghirlandajo, and one Umbrian, Perugino. Each of the masters doubtless brought with him several pupils ; among them, however, we only know Piero di Cosimo, the pupil of Cosimo Rosselli, and Pintoricchio, the pupil of Perugino. The work had probably already been begun in the spring of 1481, the artists promising to complete it by the 15th March 1482. A document of January 1482 tells us that of the ten frescoes spoken of in the contract only four were finished ; two hundred and fifty ducats being paid for each. To hasten the completion of the work a new artist was engaged, Luca Signorelli. The work was actually finished on August 15, 1483, when Sixtus IV. consecrated the chapel. Cf. Crowe and Cavalcaselle, *History of Painting in Italy*. [Ed. Edward Hutton] vol. iii. under 'Signorelli.'

room for his huge painting of the Last Judgment may well have set the pattern, as it were, of the frieze that was to pass quite round the church, and as though to remove all doubt Pintoricchio, his assistant, painted the second panel, now the first, of each series on either side the high altar, the Journey of Moses and the Baptism of Christ. Beside these two Umbrians worked the greatest masters of Italy in the last quarter of the fifteenth century : Luca Signorelli, half Umbrian, half Tuscan, the true master in painting of Michelangelo Buonarotti ; Sandro Botticelli, who alone was thought worthy to be named in Leonardo's treatise on painting ; Domenico Ghirlandajo, whom one had wished to cover the walls of Florence with portraits of her citizens ; Cosimo Rosselli, and his pupil Piero di Cosimo.

Those three frescoes over the high altar, with which Perugino began the two series that together surround the whole chapel, were the Assumption of the Virgin, in which was a portrait of Sixtus iv., and on one side the Nativity of our Lord, and on the other the Finding of Moses. These paintings, so unhappily lost to us by the ruthless vandalism of Clement vii., who bade Michelangelo paint in their place his enormous fresco of the Last Judgment, were confirmed in the example they set for the decoration of the chapel by the work of Pintoricchio, who beside them, in the first spaces of the long walls north and south of the altar, painted the second scenes in the life of Christ and of Moses—the Baptism of our Lord and the Journey of Moses. But twenty-eight years old at the time of his first coming to Rome, these two frescoes were his first great commission, won for him, doubtless,

by the influence of Perugino. A second-rate painter at best, superficial and full of excuses for the gaiety and even childishness of his work, in these two early paintings we see him not merely at his best, but really a greater painter than he was ever to be again. Still under the strong and really imaginative influence of Perugino, we find in both these works infinite details copied from him, but in both pictures the composition as a whole is not at all like the almost clairvoyant work of Pietro Vannucci. The groups are a little confused and crowded, the pictures seem eager to tell a story, the beautiful fairy landscape, strange with toppling rocks, and fair, fantastic trees, has nothing of the actual truth of Perugino's world ; it has come to us, yes, out of the pictures of Fiorenzo di Lorenzo and out of the heart of a child, Pintoricchio himself, with his mind full of such fairy business. Here and there we are surprised by the energy or sheer beauty of a figure or a face, and immediately ask ourselves whether here we may not find the hand of Perugino, such work being indeed almost out of place among so much that is merely pretty and charming : that woman so seriously busy with the rite of circumcision, for instance, or that company of young Florentines in the background there, who seem with her to be the only real people in a world of ghosts, a child's dream of a world, that passes like an untroubled yet intricate music into forgetfulness.

It is the same with the picture of the Baptism of our Lord. How confused it is, without any simplicity ; how crowded with figures that one might think had but little concern with the true subject of the picture ; and among them Christ and S. John—

copies almost from Perugino's predella now in Rouen—seem like a vision. Are they aware, then, of that cloud of witnesses, real people, concerned after all with their own business, who have somehow failed to understand that it is Jesus who stands there in Jordan,—or Tiber, is it?—and that God Himself will presently speak from heaven?

Beside these two light and lovely works, so restless and unreal, Botticelli has painted two pictures, which have been called the Youth of Moses, his sojourn in the desert, and the Temptation of our Lord.

The Temptation of our Lord! That confused and enigmatic picture was the first work Botticelli painted here, and one is doubtful after all what the subject may be; for the scenes of the Temptation are in the background, three little vignettes almost overwhelmed by the landscape and that great Temple about which surges a restless crowd. Far away to the left, under a grove of trees, Jesus faces Satan, dressed as a monk, who would persuade Him to change the stones into bread. In the midst of the picture, on the topmost pinnacle of the Temple, He faces the devil again, who would have Him tempt God; while to the right all the glory of the world passes before Him, its price infidelity, the worship of a lie: but already the tempter flees away, unmasked at last by the words, 'Get thee behind me, Satan,' while angels come swiftly to minister to the Son of God, who presently returns out of the silent desert to our world. There He finds—so Botticelli seems to suggest—the consequences of the success of the first Temptation which ended so differently from that just over, in the Fall of Man. On the right a leper healed, the type of the sinner,

saved now by the victory of Christ, approaches the altar, aided by two of his friends, while on the left his wife advances, carrying on her head a covered basket in which are the two doves. In the midst the high-priest receives from a young Levite an earthen platter in which is the blood of the bird sacrificed, with which, according to the prescribed rite, he sprinkles him who was sick and is healed, cleansing him from the moral stain of his sickness. Who can have invented this curious and mystical theology? Can it have been the work of Botticelli, or was the subject in all its intricacies given him by the Pope? Certainly the whole picture tends to flatter Sixtus IV., for the façade of the temple is an exact reproduction of the front of the hospital of Santo Spirito which he had built, and then, Franciscan as he was, with a peculiar devotion, as he said, for S. Francis, he would appreciate the healing of the leper, since their care had been among the first commands of Il Poverello. Nor does the symbolism, or allusion rather, end here, for in the background to the left of the Temple one sees the church of S. Francesco at Assisi, and there, too, the oak, the badge of the della Rovere family, to which Sixtus belonged. Opposite this fresco, meant so cunningly to flatter the Pope, stood the Episcopal throne, so that his eyes always rested upon it.

This composition, which, in its main details at any rate, one may believe to have been forced on Botticelli, confined him, too, in the work opposite to it, the Youth of Moses, for he was compelled, in order to keep to the sequence, to include seven episodes of Moses' life, from the murder of the Egyptian to the exodus, within a single picture. But, left more to

himself, perhaps, than in the fresco of the Temptation, he was far happier in his achievement. Unexpectedly, charmingly, he has chosen for his central motive not one of the more famous scenes of the life of Moses, often so full of tragedy and dramatic force, but a scene altogether simple and idyllic, his meeting at the fountain with Jethro's daughters. Full of sweetness and grace, Moses is here, from the theological point of view doubtless, a prototype of the Good Shepherd, but it is perhaps the last thing we remember as we look on that fair scene, where a young man, gentle now and full of a certain shy kindness, is glad in the service of beautiful women, bowing before them, a shepherd, too, not like Christ, but like Paris on Mount Ida. Just there we forget the terrible and majestic figure of the Old Testament, to find it again in the scenes round about, so different from the quiet episode of the foreground, the murder of the Egyptian, the chastisement of the two Hebrews who fought together, the escape from Egypt, the vision in the fields among the flocks of Jethro, the exodus at the head of his people.

Two scenes follow this in the story of Moses, the Destruction of Pharaoh and his Host in the Red Sea, by Piero di Cosimo, and Moses on Mount Sinai, by Cosimo Rosselli, the work of a master and his pupil, the first of which was painted to flatter Pope Sixtus, who had in August 1482 overwhelmed the Neapolitans by the hand of Roberto Malatesta.

Opposite these paintings are the Calling of Peter and Andrew, by Domenico Ghirlandajo, and the Sermon on the Mount, another work by Cosimo Rosselli. In the first, a quiet scene in strong contrast to the Destruc-

tion of Pharaoh's Host which faces it, we find the innumerable portraits that Ghirlandajo always introduced into his work.

The fifth scene in the story of Moses, the Destruction of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram by fire, the work of Botticelli, faces the fifth scene in the story of our Lord, Christ giving the keys to Peter, the work of Perugino.

The fresco of Botticelli, the third picture from his hand in this chapel, is less beautiful certainly than the youth of Moses, but different in sentiment as it is, not less remarkable.

In the centre, Moses with a marvellous gesture full of confidence and force, calls down punishment from heaven on the false Levites who have questioned authority, while Aaron, the true priest, gravely celebrates the appointed sacrifice. To the right a few faithful are about to stone one of the rebels ; to the left the earth opens to swallow Dathan and Abiram, while Eldad and Medad prophesy in the camp according to the Scripture.<sup>1</sup> The moral, as one might say, of this extraordinarily violent and yet splendid composition is graven on the triumphal arch there, to wit that none should aspire to the honour of the sacrifice save only he whom God has chosen even as He chose Aaron.

Perugino's work opposite, perhaps the most beautiful composition in the chapel, confirms and bears out these words as we might expect. The Delivery of the Keys to S. Peter he called the fresco, but he has built there behind the mere subject of the picture a beautiful church in the new manner of the Renaissance, delicate and lovely, with round arched porticoes at the sides leading into an octagonal temple that reminds one of

<sup>1</sup> Numbers xi. 26.

the Duomo of Florence as seen from the corner of the Via del Proconsolo ; and on either side far away in the spacious Piazza are set two triumphal arches, again in the new manner, that after all was but the old Roman style come back again with a novel sort of freshness upon it—a real new birth into a world that had never been able to satisfy itself with that gloomy, fantastic, not quite sane, Gothic work, and was already impatiently awaiting this new birth of old classical things. Far away behind the beautiful buildings the whole world is filled with evening, and you gaze past the delicate fantastic trees to the near valley, wide and full of peace, and the mountains that the sun has kissed when night falls. That hurrying crowd of people, those delightful gesticulating figures, and even this company of disciples around Christ who is founding His Church—something as lovely and as new as that Temple before which they linger—how little they mean to us ! It is not from them that we receive the emotion this fresco never fails to give ; an emotion æsthetic, if you will, but really religious too, something that we shall find in scarcely a picture that has been painted before this time, comes from the sky full of the quiet evening light, from the delicate clouds that seem to be sleeping, that are shaped like wings, and from the landscape itself that is full of the breadth and coolness of evening, the holiness of the hour after the sunset. It is as though these people, just saints and apostles after all, as we discern, with our Lord in the midst, were a vision that in the quietness of the evening had surprised our hearts, busied for the moment with a thought of that invisible Church which so beautiful and fair a Temple had brought to us. The whole world



seems to be blessed. And it is just that very perfect suggestion of evening, in Umbria at least, that gives us this emotion, that has made Perugino's work so beloved. Alberti has told us that when he saw the meadows and the hills covered with flowers in spring-time he wept, he knew not why; and it might seem that something of this pantheism, that strange stirring of the spirit at the thought of the earth from which we are sprung, has been understood by Perugino, for it is the one thing he never ceases to express. His figures, always a little aloof from life, more or less dream people, often beautiful but always a little fantastic, a little sentimental, as we might say, became less real, less actual, as he grew older; he seems continually to have repeated himself, to have been content to care little about them; but his landscapes are always full of eagerness and peace, which he found in that world of valley and mountain and lake which surrounds his home and birthplace. There he seems to have found everything that might satisfy him, and he returns to it again and again, as though, as indeed it was, it were something divine, something that in a world that was continually passing away remained always, in its profound and living beauty, the one thing that could never fail him and in which he would always find, as both before and after him so many poets and children have done, the very garments, as it were, of God, whose voice as of old we may still hear 'walking in the garden.'

Two other works remain to complete the series on either wall, Cosimo Rosselli's fresco of the Last Supper, a mediocre work enough, and the Death of Moses, by Luca Signorelli, or as some think, Bartolommeo della

Gata, which would leave Signorelli unrepresented here. Lacking in a certain dignity and passion, it is but a disappointment whoever may have been the painter.

The decoration of the walls of the chapel is completed by the twenty-eight full-length figures of the Popes, subscribed with the name of each and the years of his reign, painted by many artists, among them Ghirlandajo, Botticelli, and Fra Diamante, between the windows.<sup>1</sup>

Above these, supported by marvellous and gigantic figures of sibyls, of prophets, of slaves, and athletes, stretches the roof of Michelangelo, that new heaven which is the old earth, beautiful with the life of man, his love which brought disaster and all joy, the wild story of the world, which ends on that vast wall above the altar where he has painted not the Last Judgment, it might seem, but the Resurrection.

This ceiling, so heavy with life that it always seems to crush us under the weight of its tremendous story, was painted for Pope Julius II., the condottiere, between the years 1508 and 1512. Condivi tells us that it was Bramante and other rivals of Michelangelo who suggested to Julius that the great Florentine should paint the vault of the chapel of Sixtus IV. in order to distract the Pope from works of sculpture, and because they thought he would either refuse the commission and so anger the Pope, or accepting it, do far less well than Raphael had done in the Stanze. 'Michel-

<sup>1</sup> Ghirlandajo is responsible for Hyginus and Zephyrinus to the left of the altar, and Anacletus, Pius I., Victor I., and Felix to the right, while over the entrance he painted Damasus. To Botticelli are assigned, on the left, Evaristus, Cornelius, and Stephen, and on the right Soter and Sixtus II.

angelo,' Condivi goes on, ' who as yet had never used colours, and knew the painting of the vault to be a very difficult undertaking, tried with all his power to get out of it, proposing Raphael and excusing himself, in that it was not his art and that he would not succeed, refusing so many times that the Pope was almost in a passion. But, seeing his obstinacy, Michelangelo set himself to do the work, which to-day is . . . the admiration and wonder of the world ; it brought him so much fame that it lifted him above all envy. . . . The shape of the ceiling is what is commonly called a barrel vaulting, resting on lunettes, six to the length and two to the width of the building, so that the whole formed two squares and a half. In this space Michelangelo has depicted firstly the Creation of the world, and then almost the whole of the Old Testament. He has divided the work after this fashion : beginning at the brackets, where the horns of the lunettes rest, up to almost a third of the arch of the vault, the walls appear to continue flat, running up to that height with certain pilasters and plinths imitating marble, which project into the open like a balustrade over an additional story, with corbels below, and with other little pilasters above the same story, where sit the prophets and sibyls. The first pilasters grow from the arches of the lunettes, placing the pedestals in the middle, leaving, however, the greater part of the arch of the lunette—that is to say, the space they contain between them. Above the said plinths are painted some little naked children in various poses, who, in guise of terminals, support a cornice, which binds the whole work together, leaving in the middle of the vault, from end to end as it were, the open sky. This opening

is divided into nine spaces ; for from the cornices, over the pilasters, spring certain arches with cornices which traverse the highest part of the vault and join the cornice on the opposite side of the chapel, leaving from arch to arch nine openings large and small. In the smaller spaces are two fillets, painted like marble, that cross the opening in such a way that in the middle rest the two parts and one of the bands where medallions are placed, as shall be told in due course ; and this has been done to avoid monotony, which is born of sameness. Now at the head of the chapel, in the first opening which is one of the smaller ones, is seen how the omnipotent God in the heavens, by the movement of His arm, divides light from darkness. In the second space is how He created the two great lights. The Creator is seen with arms extended : with the right He lights the sun, and with the left the moon. With Him are child-angels ; one on the left hides his face against the bosom of his Creator, as though shielding himself from the harmful light of the moon. In the same space on the left God is seen turning to create the trees and plants of the earth, painted with such art that wherever you turn He appears to turn away also, showing the whole of the back down to the soles of His feet—a thing most beautiful, which shows what may be done by foreshortening. In the third space the great God appears in the heavens again with a company of angels, looking upon the waters and commanding them to bring forth all those forms of life nourished in that element, just as in the second He commands the earth. In the fourth is the Creation of Man. God is seen with arm and hand stretched forth as if giving His command-



*Photo. Anderson*

*Sistine Chapel*

THE TEMPTATION  
MICHELANGELO



ments to Adam, what to do, and what not to do ; with His other arm He draws his angels about Him.<sup>1</sup> In the fifth is how He drew woman from the side of Adam. She comes forth with her hands joined, raising them in prayer towards God, bending with gracious mien and offering thanks as He blesses her. In the sixth is how the devil tempted man. From the middle upwards the wicked one is of human form, and the rest of him like unto a serpent, his legs transformed into tails winding around a tree . . . on the other side of the space the two, Adam and Eve, are seen driven forth by the angel, terrified and weeping, flying from the face of God. In the seventh is the sacrifice of Abel and Cain . . . In the eighth is the Deluge, when the ark of Noah is seen in the distance in the midst of the waters ; some men attempt to cling to it for safety. Nearer in the same abyss of waters is a boat laden with many people, which, both by the excessive weight she has to carry and by the many and tumultuous lashings of the waves, loses her sail, and, deprived of every aid and human control, she is already filling with water and going to the bottom. It is an admirable thing this picture of the human race so wretchedly perishing in the waves. Likewise, nearer to the eye, there still appears above the waters the summit of a mountain, like unto an island, on which, fleeing from the rising waters, collect a multitude of men and women who exhibit different expressions, but all wretched and all terrified, dragging themselves beneath a curtain stretched over a tree to shelter

<sup>1</sup> Woman perhaps and her progeny in the fold of His garment. Adam seems reluctant to accept life. How languidly he lifts his finger to touch the hand of the Creator ! Woman, however, in the next picture is all joyful.

them from the unusual rains ; and above them is represented with great art the anger of God, which overwhelms them with water, with lightnings, and with thunderbolts. There is also another mountain-top . . . much nearer the eye, and a multitude labouring under the same disasters, of which it would be long to write all the details ; it shall suffice me to say that they are all very natural and tremendous, just as one would imagine them in such a convulsion. In the ninth, which is the last, is the story of Noah when he was drunken with wine, lying on the ground, his shame derided by his son Ham and covered by Shem and Japhet.

‘ Under the before-mentioned cornices which finished the walls, and above the brackets where the lunettes rest between pilaster and pilaster, sit twelve great figures—prophets and sibyls—all truly wonderful as much for their grace as for the decoration and design of their draperies. But admirable above all the rest is the prophet Jonah, placed at the head of the vault, because contrary to the form of this part of the ceiling by force of light and shade, the torso, which is foreshortened so that it goes back away into the roof, is on the part of the arch nearest the eye, and the feet and legs which, as it were, project within the walls, are on the part more distant. A stupendous performance, which shows what marvellous power was in this man of turning lines in foreshortening and perspective.

‘ Now in the spaces that are below the lunettes, as well as in those above which have a triangular shape, are painted all the genealogy, or should I say all the ancestors, of the Saviour, except in the triangles at the corners which come together, so two make up one of



double area. In one then of these above the wall of the Last Judgment is seen how Aman, by command of King Ahasuerus, was hung upon a cross ; and this was because in his pride and arrogance he wished to hang Mordecai, the uncle of Queen Esther, for not honouring him with a reverence as he passed by. In another corner is the story of the brazen serpent, lifted by Moses on a staff, in which the children of Israel, wounded and ill-treated by lively little serpents, are healed by looking up. Here Michelangelo has shown admirable force in those figures that are struggling to free themselves from the coils of the serpents. In the third corner, at the lower end of the chapel, is the vengeance wreaked upon Holofernes by Judith, and in the fourth that of David over Goliath.

‘These are briefly all the histories. But not less marvellous is that part which relates to certain hordes which sit upon plinths above the before-mentioned cornice, one on either side, holding up the medallions which, as has been said, appear to be of metal ; on which in the style of reverses, are designed several stories, all, however, appropriate to their principal histories. . . . But to tell the particulars of these things would be an infinite labour, a book for them alone would not be enough ; therefore I pass them over briefly, wishing rather to give a little light upon the whole than to detail the parts. . . . He finished all this work in twenty months without assistance, not even for the grinding of his colours. It is true that I have heard him say that the work is not finished as he would have wished, as he was prevented by the hurry of the Pope, who demanded of him one day when he would finish the chapel. Michelangelo

answered : " When I can." The Pope angered, replied : " Do you want me to have you thrown off this scaffolding ? " Michelangelo hearing this said to himself, " Nay, you shall not have me thrown down," and as soon as the Pope was gone he had the scaffolding taken down, and uncovered his work upon All Saints' Day. It was seen with great satisfaction by the Pope (who that very day visited the chapel), and all Rome crowded to admire it. It lacked the retouches *a secco* of ultramarine and gold in certain places, which would have made it appear more rich. Julius, his fervour having abated, wished that Michelangelo should supply them ; but he, considering the business it would be to re-erect the scaffolding, replied that there was nothing important wanting. " It should be touched with gold," replied the Pope. Michelangelo said to him familiarly, as he had a way of doing with his Holiness : " I do not see that men wear gold." The Pope said again : " It will seem poor." " Those who are painted here were poor," Michelangelo replied.

' Michelangelo received for this work and all his expenses three thousand ducats, of which I have heard him say he spent in colours about twenty or twenty-five.'

So far Condivi. But this profound and wonderful vision of life by no means decorates the chapel of the Popes : it dwarfs it. The air is so full of shapes that we can see nothing. In this place, where for centuries the vicegerents of God have been chosen, not always observant of that peace with mankind proclaimed in the dawn so long ago, Michelangelo, whose spirit seems always to be brooding over some immense sorrow, has created a tremendous and a terrible crowd of figures, each one of which seems to accuse the

Papacy and God Himself of some tragic crime committed upon mankind ;—Adam who so languidly, so reluctantly touches the outstretched hand of the Creator ; pitiful humanity and our beautiful world drowned in that bitter unforgivable flood ; the mighty sibyls bowed under thoughts they dare only express in mysteries ; the tortured prophets, the sacrificed messengers of God, the athletes and the slaves. And above all, dwarfing everything, ignoring everything, stands the huge fresco of the Last Judgment in which man in all his beauty condemns God, and, as it might seem, rises from the ease and peace of the grave only to pronounce sentence on life for ever.

If we compare this chapel, where, as I have said, man is so omnipotent that there is no room for God, with the upper church at Assisi for instance, we shall understand not only the difference between the fourteenth and the sixteenth centuries, but between Rome herself and any other city in the world, between what so universal a genius as Giotto had conceived decoration to be and what Rome had forced it to become. In that quiet, empty church in the city of S. Francis, how perfectly Giotto has understood the limitations of reality ; nothing is thrust upon us, nor is there any overwhelming passion. Our real emotion will come not from the quiet frescoes on the walls, but from the miracle of the Mass itself, said there as rarely as here, but with so simple an earnestness. At least there we may follow undisturbed the beautiful words of the Liturgy, and become a little reconciled in the exquisite monotony of the plainsong ; while here we are devoured by insatiable dreams—and we, how should we answer and satisfy them ?

## IV. THE STANZE OF RAPHAEL

When, after the brief reign of the successor of Alexander VI., Julius II. mounted the throne of S. Peter, such was his hatred of the Borgia that he refused to occupy the apartments that recalled their 'unspeakable memory,' preferring the suite of rooms on the first floor of the palace, which Nicholas V., who built them, had himself used. These rooms had already in great part been decorated by Perugino, Sodoma, and the Peruzzi, but Julius, caring nothing for the work of his predecessors, ordered these frescoes to be destroyed, so that they might be painted according to his own wishes by Raphael Sanzio, just then come from Florence, in his twenty-sixth year. It was in 1508 that Raphael began the work, which was not finished till 1517. In these four rooms, in spite of the destruction and vandalism of the sack of 1527, we still have perhaps the most wonderful series of decorations in existence. They were not, however, painted in the order in which we now see them, the Stanza della Segnatura being the first to be completed, then the Stanza d'Eliodoro, third, the Stanza dell' Incendio, and fourth, the Sala di Costantino.

In the Stanza della Segnatura, begun in 1508 and finished in 1511, the arabesques on the ceiling are all that remain of Sodoma's work here; the design is still his, but the figures in those four circular frames on a gold ground of mosaic—Theology, Philosophy, Justice, and Poetry, and the four square panels, Adam and Eve in the garden, a figure representing Astronomy, the Judgment of Solomon, and Apollo and Marsyas—are from the hand of Raphael. Under

the medallions on each of the four walls is a scene, as it were, illustrating it. Thus the crowned fair figure of Theology points with her right hand to the famous 'Disputa,' which is painted on the wall beneath.

This picture, one of the most subtle and beautiful pieces of decoration in the world, has been called the 'Disputa,' I know not why : it has certainly nothing to do with disputing or even with discussion, but is an allegory, as it were, of Theology, even as the so-called 'School of Athens' opposite is an allegory of Philosophy.

There, Vasari tells us, 'the master has depicted heaven, with Christ and the Blessed Virgin, S. Giovanni Battista, the Apostles, the Evangelists and the Martyrs, all enthroned amid the clouds ; and above them is the figure of God the Father, who sends forth His Holy Spirit over them all, but more particularly on a vast company of Saints who are celebrating Mass below, and some of whom are discoursing concerning the Host which is on the altar.<sup>1</sup> Among these are the four Doctors of the Church (to wit, SS. Jerome, Augustine, Ambrose, and Gregory the Great), who are surrounded by numerous Saints, S. Domenico, namely, with S. Francesco, S. Thomas Aquinas, S. Bonaventura, Duns Scotus, and Nicolaus of Lyra. Dante, Savonarola,<sup>2</sup> and all the Christian theologians are also depicted, with a vast number of portraits from life. In the air above are four children who are holding open the Four Gospels ; these are figures which

<sup>1</sup> The Host, as the symbol and summit of our religion, is naturally the centre to which every line leads, to which every thought tends. Properly understood, Theology has nothing else to deal with ; hence the picture.

<sup>2</sup> Dante is there for that he was a theologian, almost as great as he was a poet ; but Savonarola appears because he was the enemy of the man Julius hated, Alexander VI.

it would not be possible for any painter to surpass, such is their grace and perfection.'

Yes, Raphael has shown us there every form of belief, the most ecstatic with the most cold, the most spontaneous love and faith beside the most long-sought-out; S. Francis sits there with S. Thomas; S. Augustine with Duns Scotus. But who are these two fair young men who stand on either side in the foreground, but indeed without the assembly? They look like philosophers: can it be then that, eager to give everything its due, Raphael has thought to express in those two delightful figures the fascinating doubt of his age? Who can say? Certainly one could wish to follow them a little way from the noise of the doctors to speak with them of the life of man and the beauty of the world.

It might seem to be just that which is being discussed by the two great philosophers, of whom one was a poet, in a picture as fantastically named as the 'Disputa'—the 'School of Athens.' There we see Plato and Aristotle engaged as it were in argument, in discussion certainly, amid a crowd of attentive listeners. Close by, Socrates passes with his own circle of disciples. One can see he is asking still those favourite questions of his, so exasperating and bewildering, as he counts off his premises on his fingers, true wisdom perhaps lying on the steps in great content all the time, close beside that little eager company, in the person of Diogenes, 'who had no needs.' An older man writing busily, with a tablet before him on which is inscribed the musical scale, may well be Pythagoras; while not far away we see the astronomers Ptolemy and Zoroaster, and Euclid the measurer.

But, after all, what strikes us most in this picture dealing so easily and surely with the greatest matters, is its value as just a picture, its decorative value, that is, its marvellously lovely expression, not of any profound or subtle thought but of its own element, a certain spaciousness, confined, as we perceive at last, within very narrow material limits, but that seems infinite. It is the very triumph of decorative art, come at last to perfection in one who had been the pupil of Pietro Perugino. The difficulty of such an achievement, greater here by far than in the 'Disputa,' for there all heaven lay open to our eyes, is scarcely felt till, in an effort to understand what is really consummate in the art of Raphael—and no man has been praised so much for the wrong things—we perceive here his real triumph. That palace or temple, all of earth, full of the measured beauty of the work of man, is not less infinite in its spaciousness after all than the whole circuit of the world, the limitless kingdom, light on light, of the sky. And this is the real triumph of Raphael, not that he has summed up the ancient and the mediæval world and expressed them in the terms of the Renaissance, but that into that narrow, cramped room he has brought an infinite beauty. How awkward were those spaces he had to fill we realise best of all, perhaps, in the 'Parnassus,' where the astonishment of his victory recalls the difficulty he had to overcome. That window which so inopportunately, as one might think, breaks into the symmetry of the semicircle he had to fill became in his hands the opportunity of his triumph. Above it he drew a hill, yes, Parnassus itself, obtaining thus two small foregrounds below and a somewhat wider plane above.

There in the height, under the laurels, Apollo is seated among the Muses, Homer too, and Virgil with Dante, whom he led not only through the mazes of Hell to Purgatory. Apollo, caught in the ecstasy of his own music, is playing on a violin, looking upward in rapture, and his music inspires Homer to sing as he too gazes but with sightless eyes into the heaven whence comes this mystery. Beneath are the mortals, Sappho, Pindar, Virgil and Horace, Dante and Petrarch, and the rest.

If the 'Parnassus' shows less beauty of space than the 'Disputa' or the 'School of Athens,' it is not surprising, the miracle being that it is what it is. The figures, however, are less splendid than the composition: the Muses, for instance, being but mere lifeless imitations of antiques, the 'Ariadne' of the Vatican, the 'Suppliant Woman,' and such. In looking on these figures one thinks regretfully of Botticelli's beautiful group in the 'Primavera.' As for the Sappho it is as though here Raphael had thought to compete with Michelangelo, and had only contrived to prove his inferiority to that master, in the creation of life certainly; this unfortunate figure is a sort of caricature of the sibyls of the Sistine Chapel. The decoration of the room was completed by the symbolical figures of Fortitude, Prudence, and Temperance on the opposite wall, which fail to rouse our enthusiasm, and by the two scenes from the history of Jurisprudence there, the delivery of the secular and ecclesiastical codes, with which his work in this room came to an end.

In the Camera d'Eliodoro, with which he next busied himself, we see the advent of a new pictorial



style in his art. Far less decoratively lovely than the work in the Sala della Segnatura, the paintings here are more imposing, more plastic in effect, more realistic in their illusion. Their subject resolves itself into the Triumph of the Church. Under certain scenes from the Old Testament, 'God's Warning to Noah,' the 'Sacrifice of Isaac,' 'Jacob's Vision,' 'Moses before the Burning Bush,' the work of Peruzzi, Raphael has painted four frescoes, the 'Expulsion of Heliodorus from the Temple,' the 'Mass of Bolsena,' 'Attila repulsed from Rome by Leo the Great,' and the 'Liberation of S. Peter,' in allusion to the triumphs of Julius II. over his enemies. The Expulsion of Heliodorus from the temple is told in the second book of the Maccabees. For it seems that Seleucus, King of Asia, hearing from one Simon, of the tribe of Benjamin, who had fallen out with the high-priest about disorder in the city, whispered to the friends of Seleucus how that the treasury in Jerusalem was full of infinite sums of money, and that it was possible to bring all to the king's hand. And the king chose out Heliodorus his treasurer, and sent him to bring the money. So Heliodorus came to Jerusalem, and, courteously received by the high-priest, told him why he had come and the whole truth. And the high-priest answered that there was such money laid up for the relief of widows and fatherless children. But Heliodorus answered again that it must be brought into the king's treasury. And the high-priest, white with fear, prayed before the altar, and the whole city was consumed with terror. Nevertheless Heliodorus executed that which was decreed. 'Now as he there presented himself with his guard about the treasury,

the Lord of Spirits and the Prince of all power caused a great apparition, so that all that presumed to come in with him were astonished at the power of God and fainted and were sore afraid. For there appeared unto them an horse with a terrible rider upon him, adorned with a very fair covering, and he ran fiercely and smote Heliodorus with his forefeet, and it seemed that he that sat upon the horse had complete harness of gold. Moreover, two other young men appeared before him, notable in strength, excellent in beauty, and comely in apparel, who stood by him on either side and scourged him continually, and gave him many sore stripes. And Heliodorus fell suddenly unto the ground, and was compassed with great darkness. . . .’

Such is the story. And Raphael, with that extraordinary talent of his for gathering a multitude of various things into unity, into himself chiefly, has combined here the different incidents of that story into a single picture, not as the old painters might have done, by a series of scenes only held together by the frame, but in a real and essential unity that violates neither time nor place. He shows us Heliodorus leaving the Temple laden with spoil, we see there the women and children—that fine touch in the story, ‘the women, girt with sackcloth under their breasts, abounded in the streets, and the virgins that were kept in, ran some to the gates, some to the walls, and others looked out of the windows; and all holding their hands toward heaven, made supplication’—rushing through the streets, witnesses of the divine interposition, the sudden advent of that glorious rider, terrible and beautiful as the lightning, the prostrate Heliodorus, smitten in an instant, calm though fallen, unhurt as

yet, about to be trampled underfoot, the youths rushing forward to strike him with their rods.

To the people of the sixteenth century certainly, used and for the most part content with the beautiful illusion of beauty, that fresco, with its realism, its disregard of convention, must have been a revelation of what could be done when one thought only of 'holding the mirror up to Nature.' It was not as of old the mere narrative, lovely and full of grace, of some old splendour, as in the work of Perugino, for instance, nor that of so visionary an artist as Botticelli, that they saw there; but a tragedy which seemed to have happened under their eyes. And indeed that fresco has still for us something of the suddenness of a miracle, leaving us breathless.<sup>1</sup>

In the 'Miracle of Bolsena,'<sup>2</sup> where a doubting priest celebrating Mass finds the Host stained with blood, we have a composition not less original certainly than the 'Expulsion of Heliodorus.' The effective drama that in the hands, perhaps, of an earlier, and certainly of a later painter would have expressed itself in the astonishment of the incredulous priest, is found here in the gesture of the crowd. The central figure is motionless, turned to stone, as it were, really afraid with amazement. But in the crowd we see a marvellous crescendo of astonishment, of ecstasy. It passes over the nearer group of choristers like a wind over a field of tulips, their bodies sway in an almost involuntary adoration. On the steps of the altar

<sup>1</sup> To the left we see Pope Julius II. borne in on a litter. The only really visible bearer is Marcantonio the engraver.

<sup>2</sup> For a full account of the 'Miracle of Bolsena' see my *Cities of Umbria* (3rd edition. Methuen, 1908), pp. 89-91.

people are pressing and crushing one another in a terrible excitement which reaches its climax in that figure in the foreground, the woman who, suddenly aware, has leapt up, and with a marvellous gesture of adoration strains forward in an ecstasy of worship, herself an absolute expression of passionate faith. The priest so breathlessly kneeling there is seen in perfect profile, and opposite, on the other side of the altar, as it were, facing him, in profile too, kneels the Pope, Julius II., as he had ordered, cold and unastonished at the sudden revelation of a truth he had known from the beginning. It is a marvellous portrait, and only less splendid is that group of Cardinals in the background.

Opposite the 'Miracle of Bolsena' Raphael painted the three frescoes of the 'Deliverance of S. Peter,' which are among his finest realistic works. In the midst we see the Apostle roused by the angel between his sleeping guards in prison; on the one side, still as it were in a dream, he is led by the angel back into the world; on the other the watch is roused when his escape is known. This fresco, like that beside it, 'Attila repulsed from Rome by Leo the Great,' which does not seem to be from Raphael's hand, celebrates the retreat of the French from Italy after the battle of Ravenna in 1512.

Raphael's last work in these rooms was the 'Burning of the Borgo,' in the room which bears its name, Sala dell' Incendio. It seems to lack a certain unity, and indeed the further Raphael proceeded from the sheer decorative beauty of his first pictures here, the less his work delights us. It is true that in the 'Expulsion of Heliodorus' or the 'Deliverance of S. Peter' we

are convinced in spite of ourselves by the success of his realism, his marvellous and, as it might seem, effortless creation of life achieved with so perfect a joy, but we return again and again only to the Stanza della Segnatura, which with his portraits alone to-day seems to offer us any explanation why his name has for so long been the most famous and the most beloved in modern art. There at least he has achieved the calm perfection which we attribute to the classical age, of which, indeed, he is the somewhat fragile representative—a god born out of due time who could never grow up or grow old. For even as his work has something of the perfection of the antique, its correctness and ideality, so in his own body he was beautiful and delicate. Without the great nervous strength of so profound, so subtle a personality as Leonardo, or the immense physical virtue of Michelangelo, he died at thirty-seven years of age. And he seems to have absorbed in so short a time, all, or almost all, that was best in his contemporaries, and to have added to it something of the serenity, the quiet delight in beautiful things for their own sake, the loyalty to the old great masters, that were so conspicuously his own. It is as a scholar among masters we see him, content even to the end of his life to learn and to absorb everything that was fair, with which he came in contact; not the art of painting alone, but the scholarship, the philosophy, the history, the poetry of his day, its interpretation of the classics also, transforming them into his own terms, and finding in them the serenity and beauty of his own nature, as we have scarcely been able to do in the centuries since his death. The disorder, the tragic rebellion of Michel-

angelo were impossible for him. He could never have been sufficiently lawless in his imagination or passions to violate the instinct of reverence. And so we find in him a kind of impotence that, after all, overwhelms a nature so strong and so impetuous as Michelangelo's at last.

Of all that imperious and splendid age, glittering with many cruelties, shadowy with subtleties, that in the end made art impossible, Raphaël is the saviour. The presence of his nature is like a fair soft light over everything, or like a perfect flower in the midst of a battlefield. Rather than any saint, or soldier, or philosopher, or man of genius, he serves as the type of the Renaissance at its highest ; and his impotence—if we may so call it—is nothing more than the failure of all art to express, to do more than shadow forth that perfect state which Plato has seen lying in the heavens, which S. Paul has assured us is there eternal.

#### V. THE PINACOTECA

We come upon Raphael's work again in the small gallery of pictures the British Government presented to Pius VII. after the defeat of Napoleon and the occupation of Paris in 1815. By the efforts of the Duke of Wellington and Lord Castlereagh, the French were forced to return the loot of the Italian campaigns, but time pressing, Canovas was given only ten days to collect it in Paris. The consequence was that of all the pictures stolen in the wars and distributed among the French cities, since the Louvre could not contain them, Canovas found only some seventy-seven in the short time at his disposal ; these, however, were

among the most precious works in existence. They were dispatched across the Alps to Rome at the expense of the British Government,<sup>1</sup> and should have been redistributed to their owners. Pius VII., however, cheated Perugia not only out of the picture that was in Lyons, which Canovas could not obtain and which the Pope presently gave the people of that city leave to keep, but of the two pictures by Perugino which were returned and which are now in this gallery. Cesarei, the patriotic *gonfaloniere* of Perugia, wrote time after time to the thief to deliver the works which England had returned not to the Pope, but to Italy. For a time he got no answer. Then at last in October 1817 Cardinal Gonsalvi wrote to say that 'the allied powers' had presented all the pictures 'to the Sovereign Pontiff as Head of the Pontifical States from which they had been stolen.' In consequence of this, and for the benefit of students, the Pope proposed to keep the pictures. What is one to think of that vicegerent of Christ who, having suffered from thieving all his life, in his old age began to practise it himself? Thus Pius VII. set a precedent which the kingdom of Italy has followed, to the enormous loss of the Holy See. Truly he who takes the sword shall perish with the sword.

Though all the Italian schools of painting are represented in the Pinacoteca of the Vatican thus so strangely brought together, it takes its rank among

<sup>1</sup> We spent some £30,000 in the affair; the rest of the allies contributing nothing. As a French critic believes [cf. Abbé Broussolle's *Pèlerinages Ombriens* (1896), pp. 87 *et seq.*] we did this for the sole purpose of preventing the Louvre from outshining the National Gallery! This unkind cut loses its bitterness when we remind ourselves that the National Gallery was only founded in 1824.

the great collections of the world rather by reason of its quality than its extent. Of the chief Tuscan school, the school of Florence, it possesses but three pictures—a Madonna and Child and two *predelle* by Fra Angelico. The Madonna and Child is a small picture on a gold ground, in which the Virgin, with our Lord in her lap, sits enthroned between S. Catherine and S. Dominic. In her hand she holds a white rose set with thorns, and about her is a company of angels, flowers of Paradise, one may think, gathered about the Rosa Mystica.

The two *predelle* originally formed part of the altarpiece now in the Perugia gallery which Fra Angelico painted for the chapel of S. Niccolò dei Guidalotti in the church of S. Domenico there. In the first panel we see the birth of S. Niccolò, who, on the day he was born, stood up as they washed him and praised God. Later we see him listening to a sermon in a meadow sprinkled with flowers; and again he secretly drops three bags of gold into the house of the poor nobleman, whose three fair daughters could not marry because they were portionless. In the second panel we see the saint during a great famine bidding certain sailors unload the corn with which their ships were laden for the relief of the starving city, promising that on their arrival in Byzantium, whither they were bound, they should have suffered no loss. In these lovely works of the early fifteenth century we seem to have returned how far on our way to the simplicity and beauty that too soon passed into the self-conscious loveliness of the high Renaissance.

The most subtle and individual master of that period, the most rare Leonardo himself, is represented



here by an unfinished picture of S. Jerome, one of four works by the master that remain in Italy.<sup>1</sup> It was bought by Pius IX. from Cardinal Fesch, who had the good fortune to find part of it in a heap of rubbish. Not much later the same Cardinal, by a sort of miracle, found the other part in a cobbler's shop, where it served as a covering for the bench. Looking on this S. Jerome to-day we see, what Leonardo above all so well understood, how the soul may wear out the body, as a sword will wear out its scabbard. Alone in the desert, in the shadow of those fantastic rocks, the Saint has literally lost himself in God, and is already become a part of the universal, from which for a moment the body had sought to isolate him. The shadow will creep away at noon and the sun will pour down upon him, midday will pass into the languor of afternoon, into evening, into the coldness and silence of night, but dawn when it comes in all its tragic beauty will find him still as it were in the arms of the Eternal, for God only fills his eyes, and for him there is no other pleasure or loveliness. In that terrible embrace his body has become, as it were, a mere shadow, an appearance confronted at last by reality.

If these four pictures alone stand for Florence in the gallery of the Vatican the Umbrian School is very well represented in the work of Niccolò da Foligno, of Melozzo da Forlì, of the school of Fiorenzo di Lorenzo, of Perugino, Pintoricchio, Lo Spagna, and Raphael.

<sup>1</sup> The others are the Profile of a Girl in the collection of Donna Laura Minghetti in Rome, the fresco of the Last Supper in S. Maria delle Grazie in Milan, and the unfinished Adoration of the Magi, No. 1252 of the Uffizi, Florence.

The great altarpiece of the 'Coronation of the Virgin' by Niccolò da Foligno, in which some sixty-three saints take part in the great ceremony amid a host of angels is one of the most splendid of his strange and melancholy works. In the midst is the Virgin, like a lily bent before the dawn, crowned by the Day-Spring heralded by a galaxy of angels. Above we see a vision of Christ crucified reigning on that cruel throne we gave Him. In the pinnacles are certain bishops, and below cherubim and half figures of saints. On the left is the Blessed Virgin, then S. Catherine of Alexandria and S. Agata. On the right are S. John the divine, S. Mary Magdalen, and S. Reparata of Florence. Below are two rows of saints, among them S. George, S. Ambrose and S. Augustine, S. John Baptist, S. Paul, and S. Sebastian. Then in the lower part of the picture we see the twelve Apostles, and beside them the first two martyrs, S. Stephen and S. Laurence; while a host of virgins seems to wait on Madonna.

Beside this magnificent work Niccolò has here a triptych of the Crucifixion, with S. Mary Magdalen at the foot of the Cross, and in the side panels certain saints, while in the medallions above we see David and Isaiah.

Perugino's work, after that of Niccolò da Foligno, the most melancholy master of the fifteenth century, seems altogether joyful. He was about fifty years old when he painted the 'Enthroned Madonna' of the Vatican. His life had been a continual wandering. Famous throughout Italy he had painted in the Sistine Chapel as well as in Florence and Northern Italy. Alien though he was from the tradition of Florence as from the material glory and splendour of

Rome, and assuredly with but little in common with the realistic painting of Venice just then about to dawn on the world, he had yet entranced these divers cities by the beauty of such dreams as this—those mystical and quiet visions that came to him down the valleys of Umbria. Painted for the Cappella dei Priori of Perugia, it was finished about 1496. There seems to have been some trouble about the decoration of this chapel owing to the vanity of the magistrates, who, during their term of office, had employed a certain Pietro di Maestro Galeotto to paint a picture of Madonna and Child, with their portraits as donors. This the artist failed to accomplish, and the Priori turned to Perugino, in November 1483, making an agreement with him to paint the picture in about four months for a hundred florins. But Perugino was called to Rome in December of that year, and therefore failed to carry out his commission. Coming to Perugia again in 1495, he found the chapel still without its picture, and he then entered into another agreement with the Priori to paint the altarpiece, but for a higher sum. This is one of the pictures which Pius VII. stole from the Perugians. Under a great baldachino Madonna sits enthroned, the Jesus Parvulus standing on her knees; beneath, round about the throne in the manner that Raphael was to use later for the Ansidei Madonna, now in the National Gallery, four saints stand intent on some service of adoration. Perugino has signed the picture a little strangely, ignoring Perugia: *Hoc Petrus de Chastro Plebis Pinxit.*

The panel in which we see three saints—SS. Placida, Flavia, and Benedict—is part of a picture of the

Ascension which Napoleon stole from the church of S. Pietro dei Cassinesi, in Perugia, and which is now in Lyons. This also the Perugians claimed, in vain as we know. But mark how Time brings about his revenges. Pius VII. stole this fragment from the monks of S. Pietro ; but in 1860 the church of S. Pietro in Cassinese in Perugia was alone permitted to retain its works of art because it had befriended the army of Victor Emmanuel.

The last work given here to Perugino is the ' Resurrection,' which originally came from the church of S. Francesco in Perugia. Vasari gives it to Pietro, but Crowe and Cavalcaselle think it to be an early work by Raphael, while Morelli gives it wholly to Lo Spagna : Mr. Berenson, however, agrees with Vasari for once, adding that it is a late work of the master. In a lovely and wide landscape such as Perugino knew and loved so well, stands the tomb, a work of the Renaissance, three soldiers sleeping about it while one is awake. Over the tomb in a mandorla of light the risen Christ hovers, while an angel bows in adoration on either side. If this indeed be the work of Perugino, it must have been painted in his last years, when he had lost grip on his art. It is certainly not the youthful work of Raphael.

Pintoricchio, whose work is so plentiful and at its best in Rome, is represented here by a fine picture of the ' Coronation of the Blessed Virgin.' Above in heaven our Lord, between two seraphs playing musical instruments, crowns Madonna Queen of Angels, while below in the world kneels S. Francis of Assisi, a cross of gold in his hand, amid the twelve Apostles, gazing upward at the wonder in the sky ; S. Louis

of Toulouse and S. Anthony of Padua kneel on the right, while to the left are S. Bonaventura and S. Bernardino of Siena. Originally painted for the nuns of La Fratta at Umbertide, only the upper part seems indeed to be from the hand of Pintoricchio, the rest being the work of pupils.

Another Umbrian, Melozzo da Forlì, is represented here by one of the most splendid portrait groups of the Renaissance. For long assigned to his master, Piero della Francesca, this fresco, for it is a fresco transferred to canvas, was painted to celebrate the restoration of the Vatican library by Sixtus IV.; Platina having been appointed as librarian of the great collections Nicholas V. and Sixtus IV. had formed there. It is apparent, Crowe and Cavalcaselle tell us, that 'Sixtus, Platina, two attendant cardinals, and a couple of inferior persons are portrayed from life in the library itself, whose square pillars and panelled ceilings with their tasteful and copious ornament, are drawn with a precision of perspective hardly attainable by Melozzo except in the school of the great painter of Borgo San Sepolcro.' The Pope sits on the right in a great chair, his hands clasping the terminal balls of its arms. To the left stand the two Cardinals, Pietro Riario, his profligate son, created Cardinal in his twenty-sixth year, and Giuliano della Rovere, later Pope Julius II. Platina, the librarian, the historian of the Popes, kneels before Sixtus, and behind him stand two attendants.

From this marvellous and realistic work one passes with an ever-growing sense of disappointment to the pictures of Raphael, those three great pieces with the two little *predelle* which have made the fame of the

gallery. How strangely obvious they seem ! More and more Raphael's easel pictures have come to seem to us the feeblest part of his work ; it is always with a sense of disillusion we return to them, half shy of confessing that they scarcely interest us at all. Splendidly composed, they lack a certain sincerity ; their very perfection seems to have killed all spontaneousness which might have given them life and charm. As just beautiful things, sunlight on the wall, they are now much less fair than the work, the less self-satisfied work, of Perugino, and if we judge them as religious pictures they seem to fail altogether beside the passionately sincere work of the fourteenth century or the work of Angelico. Yes, let us confess it at once, we cannot look without uneasiness at the 'Madonna di Foligno,' while the 'Transfiguration' seems to lack a certain mystery Perugino assuredly would have known how to express. The whole picture seems to resolve itself to-day into a clever gesture only not too eager for applause. Beside this assurance the boasting of Michelangelo is a sort of humility. At least in his work, even in its most brutal moments, some spirit as it were of the mountains seems to have expressed itself, not always adequately and with beauty, but always with an intense sincerity, a passionate reverence. It was left for Raphael, in his easel pictures at any rate, to express everything he had not been able to feel, to lose himself in a sort of marvellous mediocrity that has no illusion but its own beauty. This materialism in his work, as we might say, proved to be the one thing in it which his pupils could understand. Like all disciples, they have betrayed their master. In such works as Giulio

Romano's 'Coronation of the Virgin' here, for which, as it is said, Raphael himself had left studies, the art of the Renaissance is already cold in its grave. If in the work of Lo Spagna, that 'Adoration of the Magi,' for instance, we seem for a moment to have come upon something simple and earnest even at that late day, we account for it by the influence not of any master at all, but of Nature herself, that Umbrian world of hill and valley which had already in Perugino created the only landscape painter of central Italy.

Of the other schools of Italy represented in the Vatican gallery the most important is the Venetian. Carlo Crivelli has at least one picture here a 'Pietà' full of an almost gorgeous distress, while the S. Bernardino which is attributed to him is a curious and even fascinating work of his school. The 'Portrait of a Doge,' officially given to Titian, can indeed scarcely be his, but he is represented by a signed canvas, of Madonna in glory with six saints, an altarpiece painted for the Cappella di S. Niccolò in the cloister of the Frari Church in Venice. Painted about 1523, in the eighteenth century it was in the Quirinal Palace, and Northcote tells us that the picture was then cut into two parts. Even now something is missing, for the topmost part with the dove is gone.

The other Venetian paintings here consist of a 'S. George and the Dragon' by Paris Bordone, a 'Madonna and Saints' by Bonifazio Veneziano, 'S. Helena,' ascribed to Veronese, but more probably the work of a pupil, and a 'Pietà' which seems to be from the hand of Bartolommeo Montagna.

Among the other pictures here is the only example in Rome of the work of Moretto, a 'Madonna and

Child,' so injured that it can scarcely be reckoned among his works, while the naturalistic school is well represented by the famous work of Domenichino, the 'Communion of S. Jerome,' and by Caravaggio in the wonderful but not pleasing 'Deposition,' one of the most important and profound works of that school which led painting into the desert and enslaved it to reality.

But one foreign work seems to have found a place in this gallery of the Popes, the 'Marriage of S. Catherine,' by Murillo, which Queen Cristina of Spain gave to Pio IX. in 1855. It is, after all, but a poor example of an art at its best most splendid, but easily lending itself to a sentimental insincerity which has too readily been mistaken for its characteristic pose.

Brought together almost by chance, this collection of pictures only ranks among the great galleries of Europe by reason of its four Raphaels, its unfinished Leonardo, its Perugino, and its Titian. Yet the finest work there is after all the great fresco by Melozzo da Forlì, where Pope Sixtus IV., the assassin of the Medici, sits, as it were, enthroned, Platina kneeling before him, and Julius II., condottiere and mountebank, standing by his side. One would cross Rome to see just this.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Since this chapter was written, while this book was in the press, the new Vatican Gallery has been opened. A collection of early Italian pictures once in the Museo Cristiano has been hung there as well as the Lateran pictures.



## XXII

### CASTEL SANT' ANGELO

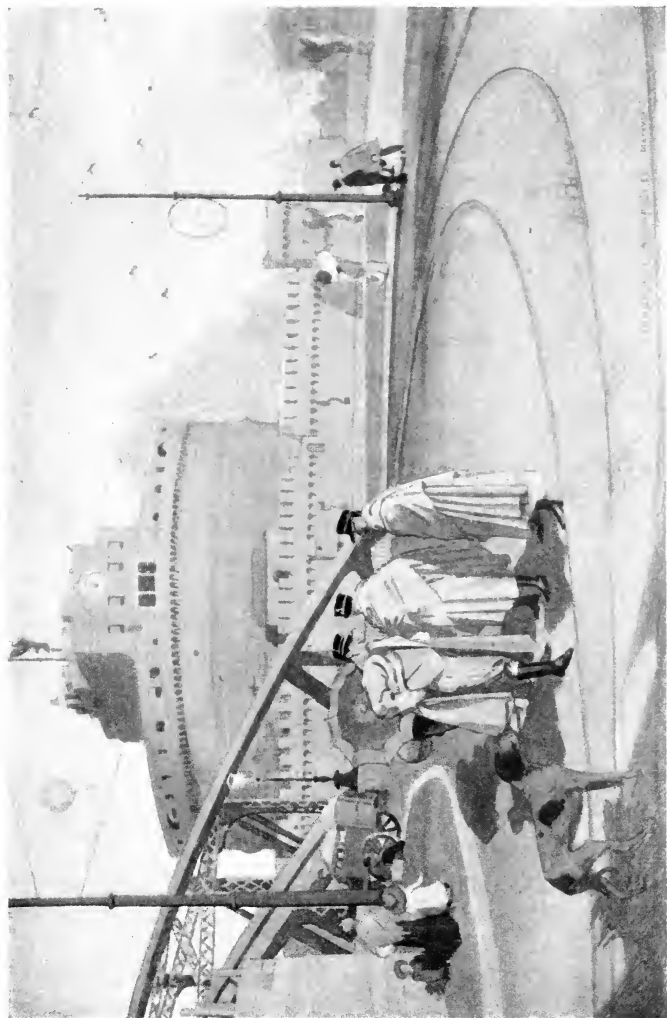
THE mausoleum of Hadrian, the fortress and prison of the Popes, might stand as a symbol of the tragedy of the City, since it is indeed the most sinister thing still living in it—still living, for it is the chief stronghold too of modern Rome.

Built by Hadrian about 135 for his own tomb, it served as the Imperial sepulchre till the time of Septimius Severus, and enormous as is the present castle, two hundred and twenty feet in diameter, and more than seventy feet high, it is little more than the débris of the Mausoleum, which stood on a great square platform of stone, each side a hundred yards long, covered from base to summit in Parian marble, surrounded on the four sides by pilasters which upheld two galleries one above the other, supported by two rings of columns, between which were set an immense number of statues, while the whole was crowned by a pyramid capped by a huge fir-cone of bronze or marble. Such was the sepulchre which Hadrian built, perhaps in envy of hushed Egypt, and certainly to the despite of 'great Augustus.'

It was Aurelian who, in the end of the third century, first turned that lonely tomb into a fortress, using it as a bastion for the bridge in his great defence of the City. Thus, what had been the wonder

of the world for something less than a hundred years in some sort became the citadel, the prize at which every besieger was to aim, the key, as it were, of the City.

In 410 it was pillaged by Alaric, who seems to have done little damage after all, for about a hundred years later Procopius gives us a description of it, in which we see that certainly till 530 it must have been much as it always had been. 'The tomb of the Roman Emperor,' he says, 'is outside the Porta Aurelia, distant from the wall about a bow-shot, a memorable sight. For it is made of Parian marble, and the stones fit closely one into another without fastening. It has four equal sides, each about a stone's-throw in length, and in height overtopping the walls of the City. Above these are placed statues of men and horses made out of the same stone, marvellous to behold.' That was written before the gallant defence of Belisarius against Vitiges, the Goth, in 530. That siege, as we know, came to an end before the great fortress, when, thinking to take it by surprise, the Goths crept up under cover of the colonnade that then joined S. Peter's to the Castle. Their catapults, that tremendous artillery, were, it seems, useless, and the enormous size of the fortress made it difficult for them to know what was happening either within or behind it. Swiftly and silently they gathered under the walls and rushed to the assault, when in despair the defenders, without other ammunition and at the point of starvation, suddenly thought of the statues, and immediately tearing them down hurled them on to the Goths, hundreds of whom were crushed under their weight. There, mingled with the dying, the most precious works of art were hacked



THE CASTLE OF S. ANGELO



to pieces by the kicking horses, the maddened soldiery, and the stones which followed them. So by a stratagem which, as has been said, Polyphemus might have used against Ulysses, the Mausoleum of Hadrian was destroyed.

The ruin got its name of S. Angelo, which it has borne ever since, in the time of S. Gregory, who, with Rome in his hands half destroyed by pestilence, used to assemble the people at dawn and lead them to S. Peter's singing *Kyrie Eleison*. 'Now because the mortality ceased not,' says Voragine in *The Golden Legend*, 'S. Gregory ordained a procession in which he did do bear an image of Our Lady, which, as is said, S. Luke the Evangelist made which was a good painter; he carved it and painted it after the likeness of the most glorious Virgin Mary. And anon the mortality ceased, and the air became pure and clear, and about the image was heard a voice of angels that sang this anthem, *Regina Cœli Laetare*. And at the same time S. Gregory saw an angel upon a castle which made clean a sword all bloody and put it into the sheath, and thereby S. Gregory understood that the pestilence of this mortality was passed, and after it was called the Castle Angel.'

Three hundred years go by, and Castel Sant' Angelo had become a prison, and then like a sign in heaven, coming no man knows whence, the new Messalina appeared in the awful years that began the tenth century, Theodora, in all but name Queen of Rome. She made the castle her palace, and reigned there with her daughter for nearly forty years. Beautiful, ambitious, and relentless, Theodora had married one of the noblest personages in Rome, Theophylactus the

Senator and Consul. The mistress of the Marquis of Tuscany, with the help of her lover and her husband the City passed into her hands. Caught by the beauty of a young priest at Ravenna, she made him Pope John x., so that he might be near her, and, as Liutprand says, 'that she might enjoy him more easily.' Already she had given Marozia her daughter as a virgin to Pope Sergius III., who had wished to exhume the body of Formosus that he might submit the cadaver to the censure of a synod. By this monster Marozia conceived a son whom she was to make Pope. Thrice married, each time more advantageously, to the Duke of Spoleto, the Duke of Tuscany, the King of Italy, she dreamed of the Empire. In 928 her husband, Guy of Tuscany, at her bidding strangled Pope John x., her mother's creature, in S. Angelo, and in his place she set up Leo VI., whom she deposed presently because she feared him. Stephen VII. replaced him, but he died of poison after a reign of a year and eight months. At the election which followed she seemed to have the world in her grasp, for she elected her own bastard by Sergius III. Pope John XI. In the event, however, she was deceived. John XI. and his younger brother Alberic conspired together, and deserted by all, she was imprisoned in a convent, where she died.

That family, only evil continually, as Liutprand assures us, has been compared both with the Atridæ and with the Borgia, but S. Angelo can show other crimes as great as theirs, though not so famous. In those dungeons Stefano Porcari died, and Oddo Colonna, the victim of that assassin, Sixtus IV., whose most inveterate foes were of that house of which he said,

'he cared not whom the Colonna served.' They took him at his word.

An 'ungovernable liking for discord' seems to have been the chief characteristic of the vicegerent of Christ, who sought to kill Lorenzo and Giuliano de' Medici at the altar in the moment of Christ's presence there. He was traitor both to God and man. When he was forced to make peace with Naples, he still kept Ferrante's allies, Cardinals Colonna and Savelli, in prison, and it was not till the end of the year that he released them. The Colonna knew him, and when Orsini was made Cardinal on the same day that they got justice, they but waited for the return of the protonotary Oddo to act. He entered Rome on April 28, 1484, and the Orsini flew to arms. Then the magistrates appealed to the Pope to save them from civil war. Sixtus sent for Oddo, who, knowing the Pope, sent his excuses in return. Again the Pope summoned him, and he was about to obey, was, indeed, already mounted, when his friends prevented him; dragging him by force back to his palace. Then Sixtus declared him guilty of treason and ordered him to be taken. The Orsini stormed the Colonna palace and sacked it; then Oddo, to prevent further slaughter, surrendered to Virginio Orsini, who carried him to the Pope, but scarcely, for Count Girolamo Riario tried thrice to stab him on the way: but Orsini had passed his word.

Sixtus imprisoned him in Sant' Angelo. There they tortured him, slowly dragging him to pieces, calling in now and then a Jewish doctor to keep him alive that they might torture him again. Then, lest indeed he should die, they prepared to kill him. 'On the

last day of June,' says Infessura, who loved him, 'about an hour and a half after sunrise, the Holiness of our Sovereign Lord caused the protonotary Colonna to be beheaded in Sant' Angelo. . . . Now when he was brought forth out of prison early to the cage above the castle, he turned to the soldiers about him and said that he had been grievously tortured, and for that cause he had said things untrue. . . . He would not let them bind his hands, but he knelt down quietly at the block, and forgave the executioner, who asked his pardon. He called thrice on Christ, and at the third time that word and his head were severed together from his body. Then they put the body in an open coffin and carried it to S. Maria Transpontina. And presently, though none beside dare come to take it away, his mother came, and she took her son's head from the coffin and held it up to the people, saying, "Behold the justice of Sixtus." . . . So they took him away at length to SS. Apostoli and buried him in the Chapel of the Colonna there. But all saw first the torments which he had suffered, in his feet which were bound with rags, in his fingers, which were turned quite about, and in his head, where the scalp had been raised as with a great knife. And they had dressed him up like a zany to insult him withal. I, Stephen, saw it with my eyes, and I, with Prosper Cicigliano, who had been his vassal, buried him. . . .'

As the days of his long and good life slowly pass on their way, that prisoner in the Vatican, thinking of this and this may to-day, if God gives him grace, recognise the justice which, though a laggard, has found him out at last in behalf of his predecessors.

As for the Borgia, they seem to haunt Castel Sant'



Angelo even yet. One meets them everywhere. Alexander VI. restored the place by the hands of Antonio Sangallo. It was their greatest fortress, and of all those he held for good or evil Cesare held this longest. It was not before their need that they restored the place and built the subterranean way into it from the Vatican. Charles VIII. was on the Via Francigena, and presently in Rome. Then on January 7, 1495, Alexander VI. fled by the secret way into the fortress. Meanwhile Charles was besieged by the enemies of the Borgia, who begged him to depose the Pope, but he seemed, and rightly, to doubt his fitness to denounce any one at all. Mad, a profligate and a fool, Charles was, though he knew it not, at the mercy of the irrefutable Pope. 'Alexander has his detractors,' replied that great incorrigible man by the mouth of Cesare Carojal and Riario, 'yes, he has his detractors, but he knows that Jesus too was accused as a winebibber and a friend of publicans and sinners. And then at least he is not a hypocrite. . . .' Which last was but the truth. Charles, had he been capable of judging any one, would have remembered he was a man of action. To use against him the irregularities of his private life was, the Italians thought, 'a low trick.' Alexander's personal morality had nothing to do with politics. So they spoke of politics. There in Sant' Angelo they had been wise enough to think of little else. Twice the French artillery was trained on the castle, where a piece of the wall had fallen on the day Charles had entered Rome; twice it was withdrawn, and then at last, on January 11, terms of peace were arranged, Charles withdrew his demand for S. Angelo, and was permitted to conquer Naples,

where he and his host were overwhelmed by an immortal pestilence.

Alexander VI. kept Sant' Angelo, it might seem, that there he might hide himself both from God and man. It was on the morrow of the murder of the Duke of Gandia that he took refuge there, perhaps most of all from himself.

The Duke, Alexander's elder son, was murdered, it seems, near the house of Antonio della Mirandola, who had a daughter famous for her beauty. He had been to sup with his mother, Vanozza, at whose palace a large party had assembled, among whom were the Cardinals Cesare and Giovanni Borgia. It was dark when the Duke of Gandia and Cesare mounted and left with a small company of servants. At the Palazzo Cesarini, where Cardinal Sforza lived, the Duke bade his brother farewell, pleading private business. Dismissing all his servants save one, he followed a mask who had frequently visited him at the Vatican and who had already spoken with him that night at supper. He went towards Piazza Giudea, and there bade his servant await him. Then taking the masked figure up behind him on his mule he rode away. He was seen alive no more. The servant was suddenly attacked by armed men, and hardly escaped with his life. The rest is the story of the Slavonian woodseller who traded on the Repetta near the Ospedale degli Schiavoni. He said that to protect his cargo which he had just unladen he was sleeping in his boat moored to the bank when he was awakened. He saw two men—it was about one o'clock—approach cautiously from the street on the left of the Ospedale. They went away and returned with two others: who

presently signed to a rider on a white horse, who bore behind him, slung across the horse, a corpse, held in place by two others on foot. They went to the place where refuse was thrown into the Tiber, and there the two men seized the corpse and flung it into the water. When the rider asked if it had sunk they answered, ' Si, signore ' ; but he, looking again, saw the mantle floating there, and one of the men pelted it with stones till it sank. Then all went away.

Two days later the Duke of Gandia's body was discovered with the throat cut and eight other wounds. He was dressed as usual, and in his pocket was his purse, in which were thirty ducats. The body, which was found below the city, was placed on a barge and taken to Sant' Angelo.

From a window there the Pope watched the procession at midnight, which, under the torches, bore the body of his elder son to S. Maria del Popolo for burial. According to custom, the cadaver was exposed without coffin, the face visible to all. As the torch-light fell on the face—the procession being about to cross the bridge—the Pope came face to face with his son. It seemed to him that he saw the scene of the murder ; he knew the culprit : ' I know who did it,' he exclaimed in his anguish, weeping for the first time, and veiling his head he gave himself up to his anguish in silence.

Was Cesare the murderer ? *In ogni modo si crede sia stato gran maestro.* The charge was not brought against him till nearly nine months later, and it rests rather upon the fear his name came to inspire, on the suspicions of the suspected Orsini, Ascanio Sforza, and Mirandola, as well as of him who was afterwards

Julius II. Guicciardini and Machiavelli, however, assert that it was Cesare's deed ; and his victims here in Sant' Angelo might seem to bear witness against him, Astorre Manfredi, the beautiful and glorious hero of Faenza, whom he cast into the Tiber bound hand and foot, Cardinal Orsini, who was so swiftly driven mad by poison and murdered : but in fact there is no answer possible to-day.

None of those sacks which Rome had suffered at the hands of Alaric, Genseric, Guiscard, or Charles VIII. can compare for horror with that which befell her in 1527, in the time of Clement VII., just twenty years after the death of Cesare. That army of brigands, German, Italian, Spanish, that, with the Constable de Bourbon at its head, really forced him step by step across the Apennines, through Val d'Arno and Siena, by the Via Francigena and Viterbo to the siege of the Eternal City, literally beggars description. Again and again de Bourbon wrote to the Pope for money to appease his host, but with little chance of staying a march that was more terrible than a thunderstorm between the mountains and the sea. On May 3 they swept through Viterbo, and by sunset of May 4 they were at Isola Farnese, six miles from the City. Then in the misty dawn of May 6 they advanced to the last attack, as ever, on Sant' Angelo. In that dense fog the fire of the defenders was ineffectual. De Bourbon, it seems, had led his men, and when he reached the walls had seized a ladder and called them to follow. He had scarcely put his foot on the first rung when a ball struck him in the groin. A little later he died, murmuring in his agony, ' To Rome, to Rome.' That morning Cellini, whose adventures in

Sant' Angelo then and later are too well known to be repeated here, had gone with his friend Alessandro, the son of Piero del Bene, and two others to reconnoitre about the walls of the Campo Santo. There on the ramparts they took up their station. At last, after watching the battle, Cellini proposed that they should go home, seeing that their own men were already in flight. 'Would God we had never come here,' said Alessandro. Angered at this Cellini answered, 'Yet since you have brought me here I must perform one action worthy of a man.' Then directing his arquebuse where he saw the thickest of the fight, he aimed exactly, as he says, at one whom he 'remarked to be higher than the rest.' In the fog he could not see whether he was on foot or on horseback. 'I discovered afterwards,' he tells us, 'that one of my shots had killed the Constable de Bourbon, and from what I subsequently heard he was the man whom I had first noticed above the heads of the rest.' However that may be, the death of de Bourbon was by no means fortunate for Rome. No one but he could even pretend to command the mixed host of villains and barbarians who presently had the City in their hands. The Borgo was taken on the day he died to the cry of *Espana, Espana*, and Clement fled along the subterranean way into the Castle, where he presently surrendered the City. Then followed a scene of appalling horror. 'Forty thousand ruffians, free from all restraint, gratified their elemental lusts and passions at the expense of the most cultivated population in the world. They were worse than barbarians. . . . Rome was at the mercy of a host of demons inspired only with avarice, cruelty, and lust. . . . The Germans

were the most ferocious at first ; and the Lutherans amongst them set an example which was quickly followed of disregard of holy places. The Spaniards excelled in deliberate cruelty. The Italians were the most inventive, and hounded on their comrades to new fields of discovery. Those who had taken refuge in the churches were dragged out by the Lutherans ; vestments, ornaments, and relics were seized by greedy hands. Monasteries were stormed and sacked ; nuns were violated in the streets. . . . The streets were filled with the dying and the dead, amidst whom the soldiers staggered to and fro laden with heavy bundles of spoil. The groans of the dying were only interrupted by the blasphemies of the soldiers and the shrieks of agonising women who were being violated or hurled out of the windows.'

This frightful spectacle lasted for three days. On the fourth the barbarians began to quarrel among themselves about the division of the booty. But they were told by their leaders to enjoy what they possessed. 'The Germans were ready to obey, and turned to drunkenness and buffoonery. Clad in magnificent vestments and decked with jewels, accompanied by their concubines, who were bedizened with like ornaments, they rode on mules through the streets, and imitated with drunken gravity the processions of the Papal Court. The Spaniards were not so easily contented. They had no pleasure in anti-papal demonstrations. . . . There still remained the discovery of secret hoards of wealth and the possibility of extracting ransoms from those who had possessions or friends elsewhere. For this purpose they had recourse to every refinement of cruelty. They hung

up their prisoners by the arms ; they thrust hot irons into their flesh or pointed sticks beneath their finger nails ; they pulled out their teeth one by one, and invented divers means of ingenious mutilation.' <sup>1</sup>

Meantime, Clement, trusting in the strength of Sant' Angelo, was bent on gaining time, hoping against hope that the traitor Duke of Urbino would arrive to relieve the City. But in vain. On June 5, 1527, the Pope signed the capitulation, and on the 7th the garrison of Sant' Angelo marched out, and was replaced by Germans and Spaniards. Clement was a prisoner in the hands of the Emperor.

The state of the City may be more easily imagined than described ; Rome was starving. The flight of the Pope to Orvieto on December 6 may be said to mark the end of the Renaissance. It was a new and far less human régime that returned to the Vatican, bewildered by the great national forces that were destined one day to free Europe from the political pretensions of a priest who had always coveted ' the things that are Cæsar's.' The shadow of the Council of Trent, which, as Lord Acton assures us, ' impressed on the Church the stamp of an intolerant age, and perpetuated by its decrees the spirit of an austere immorality,' already threatened the world. The north had risen, barbarian still, but inspired by a new spirit, while Italy lay dying of the Papacy.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Creighton, *A History of the Papacy*, vol. vi. p. 342, *et seq.*

### XXIII

#### S. MARIA AND S. CECILIA IN TRASTEVERE —THE WORK OF PIETRO CAVALLINI— THE MARTYRDOM OF S. CECILIA.

TRASTEVERE, that region apart, which for centuries was the last of the thirteen Rioni that divided the City, lies on the right bank of the Tiber about Janiculum, between the river and the wall of Urban VIII., between Porta S. Spirito and Porta Portese. Always the abode of the people, Trastevere remains even to-day the most Italian quarter of Rome, the poorest part still of what, rightly considered, is probably the poorest capital in Europe, where one may see, not always without admiration, the indestructible simplicity of the Latin race, its shamelessness, its unaffected acceptance of the promiscuities of life, its frankness and gravity. There of old, not far from the Port, lived the Syrian porters, who bore the litters all day long through the gay streets of the marvellous capital of the world, the Jewish money lenders, the sailors and bargemen of the Tiber, the dock labourers who unloaded on the quays the corn from Sicily and Africa, the precious wine from Chios, the merchandise from the East, the marble from Paros and Luna.

Not far from the Port, in the midst of this region full of the poor, a Taberna Meritoria, a sort of Hospice for the destitute, had been established in the earlier



THE TIBER ISLAND





days of the Empire, and, presently abandoned, is said to have been given by the Emperor Alexander Severus to Pope Calixtus I., who built there as early as 222 a place of assembly, a church, in the very place where, on the first Christmas night, a river of oil had burst forth from the soil, that Fons Olei, which afterwards named the building. That the Christians should have met together thus in the poorest part of the city as early as the third century, might seem likely enough, but that Calixtus I. built a church here is difficult to believe, though tradition asserts that he was martyred hereabout and buried close by on the Via Aurelia, so that already in the time of Constantine the place was known as Area Callisti. It is then the true history of S. Maria in Trastevere begins, in the fourth century, when Pope Julius I. built a church here which was named after himself, and another on the Via Aurelia over the tomb of Pope Calixtus. This basilica, built between 337 and 352, was restored in the ninth century by John VIII., who had the walls painted in fresco : but already fifty years before, in 828, Gregory IV. had added two aisles to the nave, building a *Schola cantorum* in the midst, and, raising the tribune, had laid the bodies of Calixtus and S. Calepodius to rest there. The church, however, which John VIII. had restored in the ninth century, was entirely rebuilt by Innocent II. in 1130, and it is for the most part his church we see to-day when we pass into S. Maria in Trastevere. It was he probably who dedicated it to Madonna : and it is certainly to him we owe the mosaic of the façade so gay in colour and ornament, representing the Virgin and Child between the wise and foolish Virgins, ten figures, eight crowned,

their lamps lighted in their hands, two uncrowned, with their lamps unlit : while on one side kneels Pope Innocent himself, on the other Eugenius III., who completed the work.

The same qualities of colour and decorative beauty, the same defects too are seen in the mosaic of the apsis where Madonna, wearing a marvellous crown and draperies of gold, sits beside our Lord on the same throne, between S. Calixtus, S. Lawrence, and Pope Innocent II., S. Peter, and the Popes Cornelius and Julius, with S. Calepodius. Beneath the throne are the two divine cities—as it were, Jerusalem and Bethlehem—above the four rivers, beside which the twelve sheep of the Apocalypse stand on either side the Lamb of God.

The same luxury of ornament without any real beauty of form is found again on the arch of the tribune, where we see, under a decoration of angels and flowers, Isaiah and Jeremiah, and on either side a tree and the symbols of the Evangelists, and over all the Cross above the seven candlesticks. Lovely as these mosaics are, and seen certainly to the best advantage in a church so beautifully proportioned and so fine still, with its rich, Ionic columns, in spite of the frightful restorations of Pius IX., it is not really for such work as this of the twelfth century that we are come to S. Maria in Trastevere, but for the sake of Pietro Cavallini, master of Giotto, tardily come into his own but yesterday.

That ‘dottissimo e nobilissimo maestro’ of whom Ghiberti writes with so much enthusiasm, seems almost to have escaped our notice till the discovery of his frescoes at S. Cecilia in Trastevere. Vasari, who has

so much to say of every Tuscan master, tells us nothing of Cavallini's birth, but speaks of his labours in many parts of Italy ; labours unconfirmed to us save in Naples, where we know he was employed in 1308 by King Robert. All his work in Southern Italy, however, seems to have perished, and it is really as the mosaicist of S. Maria and the painter of S. Cecilia in Trastevere, and perhaps of the Upper Church of S. Francesco at Assisi that we know him to-day, 'Dottissimo fra gl' altri maestri,' as Ghiberti says, and almost certainly in some sort the master rather than the assistant of Giotto.

There in S. Maria in Trastevere he has covered the lower part of the tribune and the arch of the tribune with mosaics. On the sides of the arch are the Birth and Death of the Virgin ; in the Tribune itself the Annunciation, the Nativity of our Lord, the Adoration of the Magi, the Presentation in the Temple. In this truly marvellous work, Byzantinism, the letter which killeth, has altogether disappeared ; and instead he contrives a sort of realism that has the energy and gesture of life, at any rate, with something certainly of its strength, its pathos too, and fleeting beauty. Cavallini at any rate has looked at nature, the world, and the people in it, and has tried to draw them as well as he could. And for the sake of just that he has forgone or forgotten everything. In him the domination of man is once more about to dawn on the world ; for he has refused the strange, disturbing beauty hidden in his own soul and its thoughts concerning God, in order to express, yes, what his eyes have seen. Looking on his work one begins to understand the strength and the weakness

of the art, not of Italy alone, but of Europe; its dependence on the body, its enthusiastic return to just that, after I know not what strange dreams and fantastic reveries and exquisite fancies. The art of Greece, the art of Rome, the art of the modern world, at dawn here in the work of Cavallini, who is already on the highway by which Florence will pass, have, or might seem to have, altogether the same intention and purpose, the expression of the real insistent world of which man himself in the flesh is, as it were, the measure and symbol. And how unfortunate have been those who have had some other purpose, let the miserable end of the art of Siena bear witness, which, after expressing with passionate eagerness the thoughts of the soul, as it were in a perfect gesture, a decoration, as we say, in which every line and space had its own significant beauty, was enslaved and broken, compelled to follow in the highway of the realist, to produce the rhetorical and sensual work often blatant enough of Sodoma and the later Sieneese.

It was from dreams then, dreams that had faded, whose expression had become just a matter of rule, that Pietro Cavallini, not less than Niccolò Pisano turned away not directly to Nature, but to Nature indeed through the antique.

It is just that, the influence of the antique, its influence on behalf of life, that we find so expressive in those wonderful frescoes in the Coro delle Monache at S. Cecilia in Trastevere. Finished in the last decade of the thirteenth century, in those frescoes the future of European art is already decided, its occupation with life, after the long pursuit of an ideal so different under an alien domination. It is Europe that is awake once more in this work of Cavallini, the

soul of Europe, the Latin consciousness. His frescoes cover three sides of the coro, and spoiled as most of them are, the most important among them, The Last Judgment, is happily the best preserved; the upper part in which we see Christ, the Blessed Virgin, and the Apostles, being on the whole in fairly good condition. Looking on those figures we seem once more to be in the presence of Roman work, not merely of work done in Rome, but of work which for the first time for many centuries, stands in a true relation to classical sculpture. There is no trace at all of Byzantine influence. The heads are full of a natural beauty and force, the drapery falls in ample folds with a certain freedom and dignity. Christ seems to wait for some interval in an angel's song, Madonna seems about to speak again the words of the Magnificat, the angels gather round our Lord with a new eagerness, one can almost hear the whisper of those restless wings. It is the dawn of a new Easter, and we seem to hear again, but with a new meaning, the old beautiful words of the Canticle, for the Prince of Life being raised from the dead dieth no more: death hath no more dominion over Him.

What that death was we may see at once and understand if, leaving the convent, we enter the Church of S. Cecilia in Trastevere through the beautiful atrium under the portico, with its antique Ionic columns, above which are some rude mosaics of the ninth century. Other work of the same period still decorates the raised tribune, the Redeemer between S. Paul, S. Agata and Pope Paschal, to whom we owe the work on the one side, and S. Peter, S. Cecilia and Valerian, her husband, on the other, above the lamb and the twelve sheep. To such a matter of rule, precept





And he, anxious to see this wonder, desired her to show him that angel which had cost him his love. But Cecilia answered that he could not see him unless he were baptized, and he, moved by anxiety and curiosity, consented. So she sent him to 'the gode Urban the olde' in the catacombs of the Via Appia, who baptized him.

'Valerian goth hoom and fint Cecilie  
 With-inne his chambre with an angel stonde ;  
 This angel hadde of roses and of lilie  
 Corones two, the which he bar in honde ;  
 And first to Cecile, as I understonde,  
 He yaf that oon, and after gan he take  
 That other to Valerian, hir make.'

So he called his brother whom he loved, Tiburtius, and he too was taught by S. Cecilia, and being baptized, saw too the angel, and Cecilia claimed him as her brother. Not long after they were martyred by the Prefect Almachius. Valerian and Tiburtius were quickly dead, but Cecilia who had given their wealth to the poor and so disappointed Almachius, was ordered to be burned in the heating-room of the great bath in her house. There she remained for a night and a day unharmed, when an executioner was sent to kill her, but he left her but half dead, for she lived for three days after. Then they buried her privily with many tears.

Seint Urban with his deknes, prively  
 The body fette, and buried it by nighte  
 Among his othere seintes honestly.  
 Hir hous, the chirche of seint Cecilie highte ;  
 Seint Urban halwed it, as wel he mighte ;  
 In which unto this day, in noble wyse  
 Men doon to Crist and to his seint servyse.

## XXIV

### S. MARIA MINERVA

THE Church of S. Maria sopra Minerva, the only 'Gothic' church in Rome, stands on the ruins of a Temple of Minerva, built by Pompey in return for his victories in Asia. A church has stood within the precincts of the temple since the middle of the eighth century at any rate, when the Greek nuns of Campo Marzio had their convent there, *S. Maria in Minervium*, which, however, they presently abandoned. More than five hundred years later, in 1280, Pope Nicholas III., pulling down the ruins of the old church, began to build in its place the church we see, S. Maria sopra Minerva, after the designs of the Dominicans Frati Sisto and Ristoro, who had already built S. Maria Novella in Florence: but the new building does not seem to have passed into the hands of the Dominican Order till 1370.

S. Maria Minerva can never have been able to bear comparison for beauty or charm with her Florentine sister, and to-day certainly, after suffering the most miserable restorations, she is less than ever the peer of the 'sweet-bride' of Michelangelo, but at least she has this in common with her rival that she is a museum of Tuscan art. Yet there, too, she comes short, for though she possesses work of Filippino Lippi, of Mino da Fiesole, of Michel Marini, of Baccio Bandinelli, of

Raffaele da Montelupo, of Baccio Bigio, and even Michelangelo, she has nothing, or almost nothing, to put beside the Rucellai Madonna, the work of Orcagna, of the painters of the Cappella degli Spagnuoli, of Masaccio, or of Ghirlandajo.

The decoration of the Strozzi chapel in S. Maria Novella at Florence was entrusted to Filippino Lippi on the 21st April 1487; but in a letter written from Rome on 2nd May 1489, while acknowledging the debt of kindness and of gratitude which he owed to that noble Florentine house, he excuses himself for neglecting his commission, saying that he is already busy in the service of Cardinal Caraffa, 'as good a patron as any man can desire,' and describing, not without enthusiasm, the splendour of the paintings with which he was then decorating his chapel in S. Maria sopra Minerva. These frescoes represent the Blessed Virgin and the Triumph of S. Thomas Aquinas, while in another part of the chapel we see the Annunciation with the figures of the donor and his patron, S. Thomas Aquinas, and the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin. In the Triumph, S. Thomas kneels, as it were, in ecstasy before the crucifix and hears the words spoken to him by our Lord: *Bene scripsisti de Me, Thoma*. In the background the world goes on its way, the quiet world that surrounded the saint. A friend who would visit him is prevented by his servant, who evidently speaks in a whisper. In the silence a dog suddenly bays, and a child drops his crust, startled by the noise: and as though to emphasise the enthralling stillness that has fallen on the world, two women stand listening to the whispers of the servant, a little disturbed even by the dainty footsteps of him who is

coming down that flight of steps yonder under the arches.

Beneath this fresco we see another of S. Thomas, enthroned between Philosophy and Theology and two other figures, trampling on a fallen heretic, enjoying the spectacle of Arius Sabellius and Averroes prostrate in the foreground. It is the very spirit of the Dominican Order, to whom we owe the Inquisition, which, as it might seem, would always rather defeat or murder its opponent than persuade or convert him.

As for Filippino's work it is full of splendour and force, a little excessive perhaps, a little too eager in its movement, but possessing nevertheless the true secret of great composition in a certain rhythm and boldness admirably used and expressed.

Of all the works of art, sculptures, and paintings in the church, but one, and that the earliest, is by a master of the Roman school, the rest are from the hands of strangers. The solitary example of Roman art is the tomb close to the Caraffa Chapel of the Bishop Guglielmus Durandus, the masterpiece of Johannes Cosmati. The Bishop is represented at full length on the slab of the tomb, which is covered with an embroidered cloth, while two angels lift the curtain. In the recess formed by an arch borne on inlaid pillars sits the Virgin enthroned, holding Bambino Gesù in her arms, and on either side stand S. Dominic and another saint. The tomb, restored in 1817, as an inscription tells us, is perhaps still the loveliest, as it is certainly the simplest thing in the church.

It was the exile in Avignon which killed the Roman schools of sculpture and of painting, art generally being lost without a patron, so that when Eugenius IV.

returned from that second exile in Tuscany he was compelled to look thither for his artists, as did Nicholas v. after him, till it seems to have become the custom always to employ strangers in all artistic matters. In S. Maria Minerva we see their work by no means at its best. In 1454 Mino da Fiesole came to Rome, and, among his innumerable works, left in S. Maria sopra Minerva the tomb of Francesco Tornabuoni, his compatriot. The less lovely work of Maini, a statue of S. Sebastian, is in a chapel close by, while Michelangelo, a little feeble for once, has left there a statue of Christ which fails to move us at all, and might well be the work of a mediocrity. And as though one could not have too much of a good thing, Baccio Bandinelli and Raffaele da Montelupo have been at work here too, building the tombs of Leo x. and Clement vii., the Medici popes. Nor is this all, for if it is a Lombard hand we see at work in the magnificent monument of Cardinal Tebaldi, the hand of Andrea Bregno, in the passage from the chapel on the left of the choir, we come upon the tomb of Fra Giovanni Beato Angelico, who died in the convent here in 1455: HIC JACET VENERABILIS PICTOR FRATER JOANNES DE FLORENTIA ORDINIS PRAEDICATORUM MCCCCLV.

Yes, in S. Maria sopra Minerva one seems to have entered a Florentine church that has come into the hands of strangers.

## XXV

## THE AVENTINE HILL

OF all the hills of Rome the Aventine alone, precipitous and almost uninhabited as it is, still impresses us with its own beauty and serenity. It is as though the ancient curse of the Patricians were still heavy upon it. Something certainly of those far-off days seems to linger even yet about its shadowy, deserted ways, among the gardens there, where in spring the almond trees are so strangely lovely and in summer the *cicala* wearies us with its song; where many an ancient church still counts the Ave Mary through the centuries, half-forgotten in a world of silence and of flowers. That silence, as of a hill without the city, seems to have belonged to it even in antiquity; thither the Plebs assembled to oppose the Patricians, and there the Bacchic orgies were held by that secret society whose discovery so startled the Republic—a host of frenzied men and women naked in the woods sacrificing by night to the Mænads such children as they might entice into their mysteries. Later there were temples there, too, for the shadowy Aventine had always been, as was supposed, the abode of some deity :

*Lucus Aventino suberat niger ilicis umbra  
Quo posses viso dicere, Numen inest.*

‘ God is there,’ said the noisy Roman world, awed by

the silence of the woods, and so the hill was crowned with temples, the most renowned and splendid being that of Diana, which stood on its very summit in the midst of a grove where that pale goddess seems to have been worshipped from the time of Servius Tullius to the time of Alaric the Goth.

As we pass to-day from S. Maria in Cosmedin, where the shadow of the Aventine mixes with that of the Palatine hill, turning into the Via della Greca and so almost at once into the Via di S. Sabina, we come presently between the long *poderi* walls to the very place sacred once to Diana, but now to a lesser virgin, S. Sabina, whose church stands in the ruins of the ancient temple.

Built by Peter, an Illyrian priest, in the fifth century, the church of S. Sabina was almost entirely restored and spoilt about 1587 by Sixtus v. But this spot was already sacred to Christianity long before the foundation of the church ; for there, as we read, the noble lady Marcella had her palace, and, after she became a widow, was converted to Christ about the year 400. Retiring almost completely from the world she sold all her possessions save her house, giving all to the poor, receiving there on the Aventine only those who came to speak with her concerning the love of Jesus. Thus she gathered about her a small company which heard S. Jerome expound the Gospel, in the meantime devoting itself to charity. They do not seem to have lived in common, and certainly they had no rule, but we may discern there the very spirit of monasticism in the beautiful gravity of their hearts.

Then, in August 410, Alaric and his Goths surprised the City. Drunk with lust and wine, those rude

soldiers, who had broken into the Empire as into a new world, were soon sacking and burning Rome. And although they respected the churches, when they came to the Aventine they did not scruple to loot the palace of Marcella. To their demand for money and treasure, she could only reply that she had nothing, since Christians like themselves, though they were Arian, had long ago sold all, as Christ had said, and given to the poor. Thinking she lied, and nothing might seem more likely, they took what they could, violating both her and her companions and setting fire to the house. Naked and wounded, towards evening, those poor women made their way to S. Paolo Fuori, where on the morrow Marcella died.

It was some fifteen years later that Pope Celestine I. began to build in that very place, beside the Temple of Diana, among the ruins there, the Church of S. Sabina, which Sixtus V. destroyed, so that very little remains to us to-day even of its primitive form; while the mosaics which once adorned it have perished altogether save for the fragment over the door in the nave, where, on a blue ground, we may see an inscription recording the foundation of the church, and on either side the figure of a woman holding an open book, representing, as it is written, the *Ecclesia ex Circumcisione* and the *Ecclesia ex Gentibus*, the Church of the Jews and the Church of the Gentiles; while above are the emblems of the four Evangelists.

What remains to us of ancient beauty, however, belongs to the doors of cypress wood, which are not only the most beautiful things in the church, but among the most precious remnants of primitive Christian art. Carved in the fifth century, they are



divided into twenty-six panels representing scenes from the Old and New Testaments, and though these are no longer in their proper order, for they were rearranged, as we now see them, by Innocent III. about 1198, when he added to them some work of his own time, the scene of the Crucifixion for instance, they remain representative work of the fifth century, the time of the foundation of the church. There we see Elijah borne to heaven in the fiery chariot accompanied by an angel, like a Roman Victory. Then Pharaoh crosses the Red Sea, which recalls the great horsemen, the treasures of Monte Cavallo; Christ is adored by the wise kings in Phrygian dress; S. Peter denies his Lord to a damsel like a Roman Empress.

The beautiful door-jambs of marble are of the time of Honorius III., who, in the thirteenth century, greatly enlarged the church, fortifying it with walls and towers. He spent, indeed, much of his time there, dying there at last not before he had placed S. Sabina in the care of the Dominicans.

Tradition assures us that S. Dominic himself often came to the place, and points to an orange tree still growing in the garden as of his planting. But amid so many diverse memories we are like to forget S. Sabina altogether. And truly we know little about her. Converted, as it is said, by her Greek slave, Seraphia, she was one of Hadrian's martyrs. She lies now with Seraphia in the Confession before the high altar, the two bodies having been brought hither from the catacomb of Alexander.

Close beside S. Sabina stands another half deserted church, that of S. Alessio—S. Alessio, the pilgrim who left home on his wedding morning, and after

seventeen years returned to the City to beg, unknown, at his parents' door, here on the site of his church. This happened, as it is said, in the fourth century. But of old, as it seems, the church bore another name : and it was not till the first years of the thirteenth century that Honorius III. reconsecrated the church to receive the relics of S. Alessio.

The building itself has little enough of antiquity ; yet a church hereabout was given by Benedict VII. in 975 to a fugitive in Rome from Arabian persecution, the Greek Metropolitan, Sergius, who founded beside it a great monastery of Basilian monks. In the twelfth century this monastery was divided and re-named ; one part, called S. Bonifacio, being given to the Benedictines, who held it till 1231 ; the other, S. Maria in Aventino, coming into the possession of the knights of Malta. To this period belongs the beautiful campanile, which is in fact all there is left to see, for the church was spoiled in the eighteenth century.

So on a Sunday morning in the marvellous Roman summer I would often pass from church to church on my way to hear Mass sung at S. Anselmo, close by.

The great Benedictine College of S. Anselmo, great for Italy at any rate, stands in the midst of its gardens and *poderi* just opposite S. Alessio. Begun in 1892 and finished in 1896, S. Anselmo was built by Leo XIII. as a college for black Benedictines of all nations. And, here, truly better than anywhere else in Rome, one may hear the very song of the early Church, that long drawn-out, sweet melody, that might seem to have been born with the mystery of the Mass, but is really more universal and more ancient, the very tones, indeed, instinctive with beauty and humility

in which man has always spoken with the gods.<sup>1</sup> For the plainsong is by no means an exclusively Christian music, it seems to have been used by all peoples and all religions, it is indeed an universal hymn of praise, of assurance, plaintive, too, and full of the repetitions of love, the expressions of an universal joy, an universal weariness in which man seems about to cast himself for the last time on the earth at the feet of the gods among the flowers.

Coming to us from the East, full of the mystery of the desert, the song indeed of a nomad people often alone with God, the plainsong, as we call it, was first caught up and, as it were, confined by rules for Christian use by the Greek Pope Gregory (not as is generally supposed by Gregory the Great) who contrived out of its mysterious beauty the 'Gregorian tones,' thus confiding to it the fundamental truths of the new religion, so that if the creeds and the Gospels should be swept away, still from the assurance of that music in which all the sorrow of the world has found utterance, one might reconstruct the dogmas of the Christian faith resolved into an endless melody.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For an account of Mass at S. Anselmo, see my *Italy and the Italians* (Blackwood, 1903), pp. 180-188.

<sup>2</sup> What the Plainsong was before it was formed for us by Gregory we may hear any day in Cairo or Tangier or in the desert. Much of it, used for another purpose, remains in the Malagueñas of Malaga; and there is the root of it in the Scotch and Irish folk-tunes which can never die. This chant became the music of Italy, the only music really worth hearing or preserving, in the Rispetti and Stornelli of the peasants. That it was the music of Greece and of Rome, I think, might easily be proved; for to what other tunes and with what other intervals could we have sung so late a thing even as the Pervigilium? The Greek songs were doubtless written for it, or under its influence in some less rugged and untutored form than we meet with to-day in Morocco—where I have heard as it were the Wrath of Achilles chanted as I must suppose Homer once sung.

Just that is what one learns to understand at S. Anselmo where the Mass is so simple and so grave a thing, full of solemnity too in which 'the vain repetitions' that have been thrust into it have no part.

And after that strangely moving ceremony, with its discreet embraces, that, it might seem, should have made all men brethren, one is loth to return to the City. It is at once too trivial and too insistent. Trivial because of all places in the world it is most full of pretence and make-believe; insistent because one is continually reminded that before it became the plaything of the Popes all that it pretends to-day was true. So one lingers there on the Aventine through a whole Sunday morning, wandering from church to church and looking over the Campagna, the one great and absolute thing that is left to the dead capital of the world.

Returning a little on the way from S. Anselmo past S. Sabina, we come to the Via di S. Prisca, and following it come presently to her church, where in the house of Priscilla, to whom S. Paul sent greeting, was the *Ecclesia Domestica*, in which S. Peter lived when he was in Rome. The house fell into ruin, but before the end of the fifth century a basilica was built amid its ruins and this Pope Hadrian I. restored in 721, as Calixtus III. did in 1455. Their work was, however, altogether destroyed by Cardinal Giustiniani in the early part of the seventeenth century, so that to-day there is almost nothing there worth the trouble of seeing. Yet one cannot altogether pass it by, for there was perhaps the first place in the City where two or three were gathered together to pray to Jesus.

It is another monastery of Basilian monks we come

to when passing down the Via di S. Prisca, and crossing the Viale Aventino we enter the church of S. Saba with its memories of the seventh century and the Byzantine dominion. Divided now into three naves by ancient columns, it is but a fragment of the old Greek church with its five naves and great mosaics. Nothing seems to be left from those far-off times, and indeed from all the centuries it has kept nothing but silence in a garden of flowers.

Across the vague waste to the south, still within the walls, we may see the tower of S. Balbina by the Baths of Caracalla, but to reach it we must return to the Viale Aventino. Taking thence the Via Aventina and then the Via di S. Balbina we come to the small and ancient basilica, built, as it is said, by Gregory the Great in the end of the sixth century. To it was attached a small monastery whose walls still remain, as does its tower, so beautiful from far away. Some importance belonged to it in the fifteenth century when the Prior had the privilege of reading the Gospel of Easter in Greek in the Papal chapel. It is now just an orphanage in the care of certain Poor Clares. Some beautiful relics of its former glory still remain to it. The great tomb of Stefano de Surdis decorated with the mosaic of the Cosmati; an episcopal throne of the same exquisite workmanship. An altar decorated with bas-reliefs, among them the Crucifixion, by Mino da Fiesole, built in the fifteenth century by Pope Paul II. in old S. Peter's, stands on the south. The great open roof and the three round windows are all that remain to us of any antiquity in the building itself, which has been more than once restored within the last hundred years.

Following the Via di S. Balbina into Via Porta di S. Sebastiano, and turning there to the right, we come to the Basilica of SS. Nereo ed Achilleo beside the Baths of Caracalla. Built, as it is said, by Leo III. at the beginning of the ninth century, but older than that, it might seem, by nearly four hundred years, SS. Nereo ed Achilleo guards the bodies of those two martyrs brought here from the catacomb on the Ardeatina in the sixth century. Its great days, however, were in the twelfth century, when it was one of the most important churches in Rome. Falling into ruin it was restored by Sixtus IV. in 1471, and later, too, by Cardinal Baronius, who, loving the place, besought those who should come after him, 'for the glory of God and the merits of those martyrs' to spoil nothing but to keep it always as it had been of old.

*Presbyter Card. successor quisquis fueris  
Rogo te per gloriam Dei  
Et per merita horum martyrum  
Nihil demito nihil minuito nec mutato  
Restitutam antiquitatem pie servato.*

So it is by his intervention that, unlike S. Saba and S. Balbina, SS. Nereo ed Achilleo keeps still about it something of its austere and mystic beauty. Consisting, as it does, of a nave and two aisles divided by octagonal pillars, its ancient cosmatesque pavement remains at least in the presbytery, while the choir is still enclosed within its marble balustrade, with the two ambones on either side, all work of the Cosmati school. The mosaics of the apse have unhappily perished, but those of the arch remain from the earliest part of the ninth century, the time of Leo III. There we see in the midst the Transfiguration, and on



THE WALLS OF ROME





one side the Madonna enthroned, on the other the Annunciation. And then the beautiful Episcopal throne, from which Gregory the Great read his twenty-eighth Homily on the Gospels, still remains. And here, better than anywhere else in Rome, we may understand something of the horror and ruin of those years, the Middle Age in Rome. Like a marvellous ghost she haunted the minds of men everywhere, still the soul of the universe, the 'Golden Rome' of Ovid; but in truth she was passing from a city into a ruin, the terrible and beautiful ruin we shall never know. It was the Renaissance after all that was to become aware of the change.

*L' antiche mura, ch' ancor teme ed ama,  
E trema 'l mondo, quando si rimembra  
Del tempo andato e 'ndietro si rivolge;  
E i sassi dove fur chiuse le membra  
Di tai che non saranno senza fama  
Se l' universo pria non si dissolve;  
E tutto quel ch' una ruina involge,  
Per te spera saldar ogni suo vizio.  
O grandi Scipioni, o fedel Bruto,  
Quanto v' aggrada, s' egli è ancor venuto  
Romor là giù del ben locato officio!  
Come cre' che Fabbrizio  
Si faccia lieto udendo la novella!  
E' dice: Roma mia sarà ancor bella.*

So Petrarch writes in perfect verses, perhaps to Cola di Rienzo, the new *Rettore del Popolo Romano*.

## XXVI

### THE CÆLIAN HILL

THE Cœlian Hill is to-day, with the Aventine, among the most deserted and silent quarters of Rome. Its memories belong almost wholly to the Middle Age, scarcely anything to be found there dating from pagan times. Indeed this *Mons Querquetulanus* seems to have had but little part in the life of the ancient city; its name even coming to it from a stranger, Cœlius Vibenna, an Etruscan who helped Romulus in his war with Tatius after the Rape of the Sabine girls. But if it lacks Pagan memories, its mediæval possessions are of some importance. Certainly to the English pilgrim—and Catholic or Protestant, who is not a pilgrim in Rome?—the Cœlian, with its memories of S. Gregory, will be among the most interesting quarters of the Eternal City.

Almost deserted now, at least toward the Palatine, in the first centuries of Christianity there was not in all Rome a region more populous, inhabited as it was by the better classes and splendid with beautiful dwellings. The temples which stood there, mere names to us now, included those of Jupiter, of Minerva Capita, of Diana, of Isis, and of the Emperor Claudius, built to his memory by Agrippina, and everywhere among the gardens rose baths and stadia and the houses of the patricians, the palace of Verus for

instance, of the Laterani, the villa of Tetricus, while S. Clement lived there in the first century, the Valerii in the fourth. It is then amid the memory at least of an ancient splendour and civilisation that we find Gregory, the future pope, living at the foot of the hill in the middle of the sixth century.

One comes to the Church of S. Gregorio Magno from SS. Nereo ed Achilleo along the Via di Porta S. Sebastiano, or from the arch of Constantine along the Via di S. Gregorio, that shady and quiet road almost a triumphal way between the Palatine and the Cœlian hills. The great church stands close to the Porta Capena above a sloping piazza full of trees, from which a great flight of steps leads up to the doors of the atrium, which, grass-grown and silent now, still stands before the sanctuary. Thus, though the church is in fact a construction of the eighteenth century, in some way, I know not how, it evokes in its desertion and its silence that heroic figure who, in the midst of an age full of tragedy, confirmed to us the religion of the Prince of Life. For it was hereabout that Gregory had his home, which in 575 he turned into a monastery that he might live there under the rule of S. Benedict. Fifteen years later the Roman people dragged him from his cloister and, to our eternal gain, forced him to take the throne of Peter, the first monk who sat there, and one of the greatest of those who, out of the religion of Jesus, have forged a weapon to subdue the world. It is fitting that England should have stood first in the mind of such an one. All the world knows the story of that meeting in the Forum with the English lads who were so fair and golden, that they seemed to Gregory not Angles but Angels too lovely for

hell. So the great Pope sent Augustine, parting from him here on the green sward before the church ere he set out for England.

The church and monastery which Gregory is said to have built on the site of his own home, in the disastrous years that followed his death, fell into ruin ; it was not till a hundred years later, in the time of Gregory II. (715-731), that they were rebuilt and placed not only as at first, under the protection of S. Andrew, but also under that of Gregory then declared a saint. Through the next seven hundred years we know but little concerning the place save that it was still used and inhabited in the fourteenth century. In the latter part of the sixteenth century Gregory XIII. gave the monastery to the Camaldolese Order, who in some sort still hold it. Then in 1633 Cardinal Borghese restored, and in great part rebuilt, the eighth-century church of Gregory II., the façade and atrium being added later. As architecture, therefore, the church fails to interest us, the more so as we find that it was completely rebuilt in 1725. Certain tombs, however, remain ; among them that of Sir Edward Carne, the last ambassador of England to be accredited to the Holy See. He was appointed by Henry VIII., and recalled by Elizabeth, after Rome had plotted the unspeakable crime of the Spanish Invasion, which ended in the defeat and destruction of the Armada, and for which we have made the Catholic Church pay so dear in the three hundred years that have since passed away.

Within the church those rebuildings and restorations have left but little that may interest us. The Chapel of S. Gregory in the south aisle, and the tiny chamber hard by, are all that is left, it is said, of the

house of Gregory. Then, leaving the church by a door in the north aisle, we come into the garden with its three little chapels of S. Andrea, S. Sylvia, and S. Barbara, built by Cardinal Baronius under a single colonnade. The first commemorates the first church built by Gregory and destroyed by Robert Guiscard in 1084, and holds two famous frescoes, the work of Guido Reni and Domenichino. The second marks the spot where S. Sylvia, Gregory's mother, was buried ; while the third holds still the ancient marble table where the saint sat each day with twelve poor men he had brought in from the highway to feed and serve.

Leaving S. Gregorio and crossing the shady piazza we turn to the right into the Via di SS. Giovanni e Paolo, coming between the old garden walls to the great church of that name in the hands of the Passionists, spoiled within by restoration, but still with its noble bell-tower for the most part as it always has been. But then we have come here not for the sake of the church but rather to see that Roman house so lately excavated beneath it. It was the dwelling of Giovanni and Paolo.

Tradition tells us, and here certainly we have nothing more to depend on, that in the time of Julian the Emperor, two officers of his court, Giovanni and Paolo—we know only their Christian names—were executed by his order in their own dwelling for the crime of 'Christianism,' which, it may be, was not merely a belief in the religion of Jesus. We hear, too, that their dwelling and their sepulchre were later transformed into a church by the Senators Byzantius and Pammachius, and that this church named after them was just the Basilica of SS. Giovanni e Paolo,

on the Cœlian Hill.<sup>1</sup> And truly nothing might seem better established than the fame of these two martyrs whose names appear still among the few that are written in the Canon of the Mass. Nevertheless it seems doubtful whether Julian, the restorer of Hellenism, the patient spectator of the barbarian excesses of the Christianity of his day, would have cared to put to death or even to persecute those who failed to understand him. However that may be, the tradition which shows him as a successor of Decius and Diocletian is in part at least confirmed by the discovery of Padre Germano, who found a house and church under the present basilica of SS. Giovanni e Paolo. But it matters very little whether Julian were guilty or no. What chiefly interests us is the fact that here at last, in the Eternal City, we have an ancient Roman house, the property of a private citizen. Even so it is the only one of its kind in Rome, and its rarity does not end there. Happily, almost perfect as it is with its reception rooms, its baths, its store-houses and cellars, and indeed all the surroundings of the *vita antica*, it is yet a Christian dwelling, and as such the only example indeed left to us in Europe.

The history of the discovery is interesting. Padre Germano, the Passionist, was one of those born archæologists who need but a hint to be sure of the way, and without instruction almost achieve more by instinct than a *savant* may do with all his learning. Before he began to excavate he had understood that much of the masonry of the present church was of the

<sup>1</sup> For all that concerns the subterranean church see Allard: *La Maison des Martyrs SS. Jean et Paul au Mont Celius* in *Études d'Histoire et d'Archéologie* (Paris).

third century, the walls of the perimeter for instance, and that to the south along the Via di SS. Giovanni e Paolo which is still in its primitive state with its six ancient arcades and two orders of windows corresponding to the two upper floors of the house. Seeing these things he was convinced that the present church was not so much built on the ruins of a building of the third century as constructed out of it: that in fact very little had been destroyed, and that what was before him was merely a transformation. His 'heart full of sweet thoughts' as he said, with exactly twenty francs in his pocket, the present of a friend, he began his excavation, which has resulted in giving to us the only Roman house, that is not an official residence, in the Eternal City. It is of his romantic work we think to-day, as, led by a Passionist father, we descend into that strange Christian palace.

For the house under that great basilica is just that. One of the largest and most beautiful of the innumerable dwellings of the Cœlian Hill, it occupied an area of some seven thousand square feet. Nearly fifty feet high, consisting of a ground-floor and two stories, it offered to its inhabitants one of the finest views within the City. From its windows and terraces one might see the Palatine and the Palaces of the Cæsars, the Temples of the Forum, the Capitol, the Colosseum, the Baths of Trajan and of Titus. On the east it reached almost to the Temple of Claudius. On the south it looked over the palaces and tenements that lay between it and the Aurelian wall to the Campagna and the great roads lined with tombs that led southward to the hills.

There were in Rome, as M. Allard tells us, two kinds

of houses, the *insulæ*, or, as we might say, mansions or flats inhabited by many families, each with its own apartment, and the houses proper, where a single family rich and powerful dwelt alone, even as to-day in France or England. In Italy such a dwelling is still called a *palazzo*, and it is in truth one of these that Padre Germano has discovered on the Cœlian Hill. Built, as they seem to have been, if one may judge by the discoveries at Pompeii and Herculaneum rather than by the written description, all on one plan but with an infinite variety of detail, the ancient palace for the most part consisted of a *protyrum* which opened on to the road, a sort of vestibule which led into the great rectangular *atrium*, surrounded by columns in the midst of which, under the open sky, was a fountain. To the right and left of this atrium were the rooms for domestic business, and beyond, opposite the *protyrum*, opened the *tablinum*, the principal chamber of the house, the salon or reception-room. Beyond this opened another *atrium* called the *cavædium*, around which were set the most private parts of the house where the master dwelt with his family and where were to be found the bedrooms, dining-rooms, library, and so forth ; this second atrium forming a sort of garden where often statues stood about a green lawn mixed with roses. It is on this plan that this palace on the Cœlian Hill was built, but with numerous modifications due to individual taste or the necessities of the site. And in examining this ancient Roman house one is struck once again, as often before, by the darkness that must have filled the rooms. The more private apartments certainly received no light save by the door, and one is compelled to suppose that the Romans



lived a more public life than ourselves, passing the day at the baths or in the Forum, and returning to their houses only at evening, when, the lamps being lighted, those dark, cool rooms were pleasant and quiet after the noise and sunshine of the day.

But among the most interesting features of this palace on the Cœlian are its upper floors, which, so rarely preserved, assure us of the truth of Petronius's words, when he tells us that the Roman houses 'towered into the sky,' and indeed, as we know, the buildings grew so high within the city that Augustus and Trajan sought to limit them, the one to seventy feet, the other to sixty. No doubt the mansions in which numerous families dwelt were, even as to-day, the highest, this palace, great as it seems, falling short by more than ten feet even of Trajan's limit. Within we find, as I have said, the usual arrangement of a Roman house. We see the great Bath chamber in the midst of which is a huge earthenware basin, where after the massage and the vapour baths, the bather refreshed and cleansed himself. This great room was in the midst of the house, and underground and about it were set the apartments for the slaves, the store-houses and cellars, full still of the great vases of wine and oil, some of which are marked with the monogram of Christ, and were doubtless set apart for use at Mass, others with various signs denoting foreign or home-grown wines. These rooms were, of course, bare, but the more splendid apartments were decorated with marble, sculptures, paintings, and mosaics, almost nothing of which remains, save in the pavements and certain wall-paintings which have happily escaped destruction.

The *triclinium*, which opens out of the *cavædium* on the right, is partly lined with white marble to a height of some two yards, and above are painted around the room two life-size, draped Genii, one of whom is winged. They are caught in a great garland of flowers that, from one to the other, winds round the chamber, while birds wander among the flowers at their feet, and others fly, as it were, in the sky above them, which once doubtless covered the ceiling, now perished. All this seems to be pagan work ; but in a room close by, where the earlier paintings have been destroyed, we come upon what seem to be the symbols of Christianity, figures of fish and doves, the most ancient emblems of our Lord and the Holy Spirit. But it is in the *tablinum* we find this Christian work at its best, fourth-century painting of a real beauty and character covering all the walls and those parts of the roof which remain. There, amid painted pilasters, arcades, and the usual Roman decoration, under a rich frieze of flowers and leaves, the acanthus among them, one sees on the roof two sheep and two goats placed alternately on either side a tree, to which they turn, as though on either side of our Lord were set the good and the bad. With these compositions six others altogether different are mixed. Is it the Apostles we see reading or praying, the four evangelists with SS. Giovanni and Paolo ? Who knows ? We call these paintings Christian, but there might seem to be little if anything there that might not be just the decoration of a pagan house. Even the praying youth in the room close by might seem to have as much in common with the statue in Berlin as with anything essentially Christian. But we are told

that this figure so calm and expressive is an emblem of the Church. It may be so.

What then we are supposed to have here under our eyes is a Roman palace belonging to some great Roman family in the service of the Emperor. Splendidly decorated in pagan times, when SS. Giovanni e Paolo owned it, it was in part redecorated with paintings of Christian symbols, vague and almost secret that could in no way offend a world still mainly pagan. Of the two saints we know really nothing, save the rumour of their martyrdom and their early fame in the Church. Tradition tells us that in the fourth century Byzantius, a senator, and his son, Pammachius, the friend of S. Jerome, built a church in the house of the two martyrs, and a chapel there lately excavated still possesses a fourth-century altar *in situ*. Known certainly in the fifth century as *Titulus Bizantis* or *Titulus Pammachii*, the church was restored by Pope Symmachus in 499 and twice in the course of the eighth century. In the thirteenth century the present church and portico were built, the former having, as we see, been restored again and again out of all recognition.

Leaving SS. Giovanni e Paolo and following the road that bears their name one comes presently to the Arco di Dolabella which once carried the Acqua Marcia across an ancient street. Close by is the gate of the old convent of the Trinitarians which stood where now we see the Villa Mattei.

The Order of the Trinitarians, in England called Crutched Friars, an order of Mendicants really, but having little or nothing in common with the Franciscans or the Carmelites, was founded by S. Jean

de Martha toward the end of the twelfth century for the redemption of captives. That is why our Lord is represented in the mosaic by the Cosmati above the gate between a white and a black slave whom He came to set free as S. Jean de Martha perceived. The work of the Order was properly the redemption or ransom, from the Saracens and the Arabs, of captives, some nine hundred thousand of whom they are said to have then set free.

Close by is the very ancient church of S. Maria in Domnica or the Navicella as some call it because of the marble boat which stands before it. One of the most ancient churches in Rome, the house, as it is said, of Cyriaca where the Christians met in the time of the great persecutions, it alone in Rome has retained its ancient title of *Dominicum*. It is chiefly interesting to us to-day, however, on account of its fine mosaic on the tribune arch, a work of the early ninth century, where we see the first extant portrait of a Pope, Paschal I., in alb and stole, kneeling there beside the Madonna enthroned with her little Son between the Angels. Tradition tells us that Raphael and Bramante restored the place in 1500 to the order of Giovanni de' Medici, afterwards Leo x.

But the finest building still existing on the Cœlian Hill is the great round Church of S. Stefano Rotondo, with its fine mosaic and beautiful columns. Larger of old than it is now, its pillars built into the outer wall forming a second circle surrounded in its turn by a wall, S. Stefano is a Christian building of the fifth century. In the seventh century Pope Theodore brought there the bodies of the martyrs, Primus and Felicianus, burying them in the porch which was



*Photo. Alinari*

S. STEFANO ROTONDO



then turned into an apse and decorated with mosaics. There we see the shining cross under a bust of our Lord with saints on either side. We seem to see here a shy attempt at representing the Crucifixion which was not permitted till a century later.

The paintings of every sort of atrocious torture here by Pomarancio and Mattei of Siena are too horrible and realistic to look upon. They are in truth '*le sublime des âmes communes*,' as Stendhal very justly said. In us, however, they can inspire nothing but disgust and a sort of contempt of those who have cared to heap horror upon horror to decorate a church or to win a soul for the Prince of Life.

## XXVII

### THE PINCIO

THE Piazza di Spagna, that beautiful, irregular square, with its strange fountain before the Palace of the Spanish Embassy at the foot of the Spanish steps, remains, for the English certainly, the very centre of Rome, though indeed it is but just within the Aurelian wall. It is, in fact, one of the most characteristic places in the modern city, Papal so long, the key, as it were, to all the strangers' quarter, which still forms so important and even so indispensable a part of the old capital of the world. For without it Rome might seem indeed something less than eternal. Here at least we may see daily under our eyes her old power of drawing all men to her still in action, in spite of every transformation, in spite even of the fact that she, to whom the whole world was once but an antechamber, has now become the plaything of the youngest of the nations. Even yet in our crude thousands we come to her, to what end, for what help or message, in what need it would be difficult to explain. We come, and it is enough, and she who has ever dreamed of possessing the world first in her own behalf and then for the kingdom of Jesus, is content in her new rôle to see the actual rulers of the world astonished in her streets, dazzled by an outworn glory. How dim that glory is one realises better perhaps in the Piazza di Spagna



than anywhere else in the city. The whole place is, as it were, the expression of a lost cause, lost because less than noble. And there, before the little shops of the English, rises the sign, the extraordinary symbol of the last of her delusions with which she has sought to blind and delude the world that she might bring all men under her feet, the vast and giddy column of the Immaculate Conception which Gregorovius saw even in our fathers' time dragged to its place by galley slaves, the monument of Mary Madonna set up by those still in captivity whom, as we may believe, Jesus her Son had died to set free.

We forget all such crimes, however, the inevitable results of that want of logic which made the vicar of Christ a mere temporal sovereign, when coming on a winter evening along the Via Condotti we see the real beauty of Rome, a beauty really of atmosphere, of colour in the splendour which the sunset has laid upon the whole Piazza, and not least upon that stucco church whose twin towers seem to guard it from the summit of the Spanish steps. In that fortunate hour the whole place is an acropolis of ivory and precious moonstone, stained with delicate purple and rude gold.

Eighteenth-century work though it be, on how many nights one is content to find that marvellous staircase the most beautiful thing in Rome. In the daytime, barricaded with flowers, noisy with the little people and old men who sit, as I suppose, to certain unthinkable romantic painters, the Piazza itself full of English carriages, the American tongue everywhere, everywhere, mixed with the clang of the trams, the Scala della Trinità de' Monti is as intolerable as the hill of Purgatory, the haunt of those mediocre souls

which have not dared to rise to the pride of a crime nor been able to stoop to the humility of blessedness. But in the twilight and the darkness when it is deserted by all, its grave, artificial lines so cunningly sumptuous, seem almost ascetic and very quiet in their ample beauty leading one slowly, with dignity, with many well-timed pauses to the summit. And then, too, the mere stucco of the beautiful church to which it serves as a threshold or atrium is lost in the generous beauty of night. One might think it indeed to be of marble or some precious unheard of stone, chrysoprase or amber, jasper or chalcedony, or of ivory and pallid gold. Built in 1493 by that madman, Charles VIII. of France, the SS. Trinità de' Monti has something of the ecstasy of a great French building restrained by the sanity of the sun. It is strange that from its foundation till its partial destruction in 1798 it should have been in the possession of an order so insane, as it were, and enthusiastic as the Minimite friars, as their founder, the Calabrian, S. Francesco of Paola, wished his *frati* to be called—not the lesser friars like the Franciscans, but the least of all. Plundered and ruined during the French Revolution, the church was restored in 1816 by Louis XVIII. and is now in the keeping of the little nuns of the Sacre Cuore, for whom Mendelssohn wrote the somewhat superficial music we may still hear at vespers, when at the sound of their bell, the gardens of the Pincio so soon are empty, and all the City seems to pass suddenly from daylight into dusk under the iron cloud of sound that has burst over it, it seems, at that signal.

Something of the fantastic beauty of that church

which lends itself so readily to every aspect of the sky is to be found everywhere on the Pincio, which on certain afternoons is the one really gay and irresponsible place in the City, unawares so beggared. There, as it were, above the City, on a summer afternoon, amid the languid fountains, under the evergreen trees whose sharp leaves seem to be all of bronze, that trivial and tirelessly formal or weary world takes its ease, a little harshly and noisily perhaps, as Rome has always done, listening to music, or, cynically curious, watching the new Giulia Bella as she passes to and fro that small garden which takes on something of the aspect of a circus where the horses pass continually round and round chiefly for our delight. In the shadow and the sun run the children, little souls as gay as fairies playing at hide-and-seek among their elders, or curiously watching one another, longing to be friends. Here and there struts an officer, in the shade under the trees a woman languishes beside her duenna, the little gay women pass alert, monotonously along the paths, the strangers yawn in their iron chairs or wander to the look-out; round and round amble the horses, and the loud, self-conscious music of modern Italy plays the sun to its setting, boldly unaware of the tragic City which lies like a shadow on the hills, into which they will all pass so swiftly and so indifferently at the sound of the bells.

The seminarists in their multi-coloured uniforms, their frocks of scarlet, their cassocks of crude blue and orange, or purple, or black, mix with the indifferent crowd, looking a little longingly at the women, or standing in a heap, as it were, untidy, unhealthy, listless and envious, trooping away company after

company at the sound of the Ave Mary—well—the last slaves of the eternal City. One meets them often thus as one comes into the Pincian Gardens, as I love to do, from the Trinità de' Monti, at the close of the day, when the crowd is leaving it, past the beautiful Villa Medici with its cloister of ilex before it in which a fountain of a single jet plays all day long; and watching them as they pass without joy or youthfulness even, without virility, energy, or love, one realises that it is no longer given to them to move the world, they are but envious shadows that look a little at life in ignorance, fear, and contempt, and pass away into their own darkness.<sup>1</sup>

But it is not thus in the afternoon or at sunset alone that the Pincio has a charm, but early in the morning too, before the sun has southed. It is almost deserted then, and the fountains whisper together in the silence in the shadow and the sun. One wanders there under the trees always returning to the look-out over the City towards S. Peter's, lingering there for a time before descending to the Piazza del Popolo and the beautiful church of S. Mary. Out of the gate Porta del Popolo passes the Flaminian way, and by that road our fathers came from England, S. Maria del Popolo being indeed the first Roman church they would see.

Built at the end of the eleventh century by Pope Paschal II. to exorcise those evil spirits which were supposed to haunt the tomb of Nero, buried hereabout,

<sup>1</sup> This may seem hard measure, but it is the truth. One of the most eminent, tolerant, and just men in Italy said to me not long since, speaking of the advance of his country, 'But wherever there is a village there is a church, and wherever there is a church there is a priest, that is a bad thing.' Such a sentiment would be impossible in England. Why is this? The histories of France, Italy, Spain, and Ireland will explain it.

it was rebuilt in 1227 by Gregory IX. and got its present name at that time, for the Pope brought thither a famous image of Madonna from the Lateran. The church we now see, however, is not Gregory's, but that which Sixtus IV. built after designs by Pintelli in 1472. It is strange that it has always been connected with people the most detested, for if it stands in Nero's burial place, it was the church of the Borgias, and Luther stayed in the adjacent convent of Augustinians when he came to Rome. The chief interest S. Maria del Popolo has for us to-day, however, is rather artistic than historical, for it possesses some fine frescoes by Pintoricchio, and the Chigi Chapel there was built after designs by Raphael, while the tombs of Cardinals Sforza and Basso are the work of Andrea da Sansovino.

The church which Sixtus had restored was naturally a favourite with his family, the Rovere, and in 1480 Girolamo Riario, the Pope's nephew, became its chief warden. Nor were they alone in their love of it, for in 1473 Roderigo Borgia had given a marble altar for the service of the Madonna Gregory IX. had brought from the Lateran. It is, however, chiefly to the Rovere family that we owe the frescoes of Pintoricchio that remain to us, those in the chapel painted to the order of Cardinal Innocenzio Cibò having perished.

For Domenico della Rovere, Cardinal of S. Clemente, Pintoricchio painted the first chapel on the left with the story of S. Jerome, while in the third chapel on the left he or his pupil painted, for the nephews of Giovanni Basso della Rovere, five lunettes of the life of Madonna, and the vault of the choir above the tomb of Cardinal Basso is painted in his manner with the Redeemer and Madonna, and beneath the four

Evangelists, the four sibyls, and the four doctors of the Church. It is, however, only in the chapel of S. Jerome that we are, according to modern opinion, face to face with Pintoricchio's own work. Over the altar is the Nativity, that one might almost mistake for Perugino's Adoration at Perugia, and there around it, as it were, five lunettes with scenes from the life of S. Jerome.

On the opposite side of the church is the Chigi Chapel, which Raphael designed. In the form of an octagon, surmounted by a drum on which stands the beautiful cupola, it is worthy of that master, perfect in proportion and charming because it is absolutely in tune with itself. Decorated by Luigi della Pace from Raphael's designs, it is one of the few unspoiled works of art, carried out under the supervision of one man, left to us in Rome.

The Borgia, unlike the Rovere, have left in S. Maria del Popolo nothing but a memory, unless we remember that coat carved on the Tabernacle of Bregno in one of the chapels there. Nevertheless, the church was especially dear to them. There the Duke of Gandia was buried with his mother, Vanozza, there Lucrezia went to mourn her murdered husband, and later, in September 1501, she there rejoiced when she learned that she was to marry Alfonso d'Este. She rode thither through the City in magnificent attire to offer thanks, escorted by four bishops and three hundred horsemen. Her robe, which cost some three hundred ducats, she gave to her court-buffoon who, putting it on, rode through Rome shouting, 'Hurrah for the most illustrious Duchess of Ferrara! Hurrah for Pope Alexander VI.!' In that spectacle Rome seemed once more to have found herself.

## XXVIII

### THE JANICULUM

THE Janiculum, that golden hill of sand, Mons Aureus, Montorio, stands like a huge long bastion to the west of the City, between the City and the desert, the Campagna, the most beautiful desert in the world. Sacred to Janus of the sun, itself, as Pliny tells us, I know not with how much truth, the site of that old city of Janus Antipolis, there Numa, the Sabine king, was buried in the golden age, the books of his laws and ordinances being hidden with him in that sacred soil. For long the true bulwark of Rome, the key of Etruria, it was thence the great Etruscan leader, Tarquinius Priscus, the future king looked down on the City, as Lars Porsena did when that other Tarquin, surnamed the Proud, returned in vain after his deposing and expulsion, and Horatius kept the bridge. That is almost the last notable incident in the history of Rome which the Janiculum can claim: since then it has stood there a huge, disused bulwark between the City and the vast solitude which for so long has hemmed her in, that beautiful desert of which she has been the marvellous rose. And to-day the Janiculum still stands on guard: the wind that comes from the sea, like a white ghost across those low, inviolate downs, breaks first on this tremendous bastion which, scattered with laughter and music, hides

the setting sun, casting at evening the first shadow over Rome. It keeps the gates of Latium and speaks with Soracte and the Alban Hills, the Monti Sabini and the sea. It is the look-out of the City, and just as the Tarquins and Porsena first gazed thence on Rome, so we too, after many endeavours, look thence for the first time on what was once the capital of the world, and is still so beautiful and moving, full of the great and friendly shadows that people that immortal air.

Driving thither from the strangers' quarter by Trastevere to S. Pietro in Montorio, or from S. Pietro in Vaticano by the gate of the Holy Spirit and S. Onofrio, by whatever way your approach may be, you come out of the City into a solitude, and it is in an almost absolute silence you will then look for the first time from the City to the Campagna, from the Campagna to the changeless hills. From that priceless solitude Rome seems to lie beneath you spread out at your feet, a not too vast bewilderment of domes, towers, warm roofs and golden houses among the green oasis of her hills. Here and there some famous building shines like a planet in this vast constellation that has decided the fate of the world. Lonely, on the north, rises S. Peter's, thence to the east and southward stand, like seven stars, the seven domes, S. Agnese in Piazza Navona, S. Andrea della Valle, the Pantheon, S. Trinità de' Pellegrini, S. Carlo al Corso, Il Gesù, and S. Maria in Campitelli. Beyond these, eastward from north to south, rise Castel S. Angelo, the Villa Medici, the Villa Ludovisi, the Palazzo Quirinale, the Campidoglio, the Colosseum, the ruins of the Palatine, the Villa Mattei on the Cœlian, S. Sabina in Aventino, S. Alessio in



Aventino, and on the edge of the Campagna, scattered with the vast ruins of the aqueducts, stands the Pyramid of Cestius at the gate of S. Paul. Within this marvellous arc lies the City herself across which the Tiber is bound like an inviolate girdle of gold, sealed with the bridges whose names are household words.

Hinc septem dominos videre montes  
Et totam licet æstimare Romam. . . .

One turns aside at last from that too dazzling and too sad spectacle to enter the church of S. Pietro in Montorio. Founded in the ninth century, but rebuilt in the fifteenth by the Catholic kings after designs by Baccio Pintelli, the church consists of a single nave fine and spacious with four chapels on either side, the first and second on the south being decorated by Sebastiano del Piombo, and the pupils of Perugino. There is little else to see, but somewhere beside the high altar Beatrice Cenci sleeps in her nameless grave. The fame of the church arose from the legend which was current in the fifteenth century, though apparently not earlier, that S. Peter was here crucified. For this cause Bramante designed the marvellously lovely temple to the south of the church in the garden of the Franciscan convent that stands beside it.

Behind S. Pietro is the great Fontana Paolina in whose name you may find that of its architect and of the Pope, Paul v., who built it. Thence along the Passeggiata Margherita to S. Onofrio and Tasso's Oak, you have the City at your feet, and before you one of the most wonderful views in the world of the desert and the hills. And so it is always a little reluctantly

that at evening or midday one descends at last to S. Onofrio.

Founded in the first half of the fifteenth century by a certain Niccolò da Forca Palena, a Gerolomite hermit, with the assistance of Eugenius IV., S. Onofrio became the last refuge of Tasso who, only a shadow of himself, came to die there in 1595. Half mad with disgrace, persecution and misfortune, the poet had come to Rome at the bidding of Clement VIII., Aldobrandini, who, thinking to honour him, wished to place on his head the crown of Petrarch. But as it happened, this consolation, and to Tasso certainly it would have been an infinite comfort, was denied him, for before the coronation took place he became ill with fever, and, retiring to S. Onofrio, he presently died there in a cell which we may still visit in the convent.

The church, however, has other claims on our notice than the presence there of Tasso. Approached by a fine portico, beneath which are certain lunettes painted by Domenichino, and the Chapel of the Rosario, in which is the tomb of the founder of the order, Pietro Gambacorti of Pisa, it consists of a single wide nave with two chapels on either side, one of which contains an altar-piece by Carracci, another, the monument to Tasso, erected by Pius IX. It is, however, in the tribune that we find those frescoes by Baldassare Peruzzi which, for all their repainting, still recall to us dimly the charming work of the school of Perugino. Below we see the Virgin and Child between S. Onofrio, S. Jerome, S. Mary Magdalen, and Niccolò da Forca Palena, the founder of the church, while on one side is the Nativity, on the other the Flight into Egypt, and above, the Coronation of the Virgin, with the four



ROME FROM TASSO'S OAK



Sibyls, and five angels in the lunettes. We come upon Peruzzi's work again in a lunette to the right of the high altar, where he has painted S. Anne and the Virgin, and indeed so charming a mannerist as he, seems altogether in place in the church we have visited really for the sake of Tasso. But even Tasso's name might seem to be but an excuse for lingering where the world is so wide and fair, where, between the desert and the hills, Rome lies like some great flower in the sun, or at evening is lost in the twilight and built in our dreams.

## XXIX

### THE GALLERIES OF SCULPTURE

#### MUSEO NAZIONALE

THE Museo Nazionale lately founded in the Baths of Diocletian in the monastery of the Church of S. Maria degli Angeli chiefly for the reception of those antique works of art which, from time to time, are found within the Eternal City, and marvelously enriched by the inclusion of the Boncompagni Collection, contains the most precious collection of sculptures in Rome, not only because of the rarity and beauty of the statues, but also because they are for the most part untouched by the restorer, and come to us with all, or nearly all, their original beauty of form and texture. In the Capitoline Museum, or the Galleries of the Vatican, we have a vast array of statues, Roman copies after lost Greek originals, compromised and spoiled for us by the restorer and polisher who, from the time of the Renaissance till our own day, have not hesitated to try to amend the destruction of time, only to confirm it and to hide from us what little beauty had escaped that inevitable vengeance. For this cause the Venus de' Medici moves us so little, the Venus of the Capitol seems to have lost her charm, the Apollo of the Belvedere fails to convince us of his nobility, the Apoxyomenos seems to have lost some-







thing of his perfection. In those famous galleries there is scarcely a statue that is not just a spoiled gesticulation, interrupted by time it is true, but interpreted by vandals who have not hesitated to supply in their own barbarous fashion what had been lost of the work of the ancients, and this in the ages which knew infinitely less than we may do of that far-off and vanished world. In the Museo Nazionale, however, another and a better fashion has been followed; the works we see there, whatever their original beauty may have been, are not patched and smoothed out of all recognition, but remain, broken it is true, yet unspoiled by the narrow taste of the Renaissance, the vicious taste of the centuries since then. And so, although almost nothing is to be found there which may compare with the treasures of the museums of London and Athens, we may find in those broken statues something of the delicacy and beauty which their creators gave to them, and which time alone has been powerless altogether to take away.

This at least would confer on the Museo Nazionale a distinction which no other museum in Rome possesses, and then, set as it is, about a garden of cypresses in a ruined cloister designed by Michelangelo, the building is in itself a work of art, romantic too and full of a peculiar charm which doubtless contributes to our enjoyment of the work that has been placed there—work that in its more precious examples at any rate has nothing to do with Rome, and remains as alien there as it is in the Louvre or the British Museum. All the art of the world is really a stranger in Rome; crowded as it is with works of art, the Eternal City holds them all even to-day as spoil. Her art was government; for

the rest—and in this too we are her kith and kin—she had but contempt; with her, art was a fashion that served to deck her triumphal progress or to commemorate what she had done. Nor was this attitude towards beauty, beauty as a part of the moral nature of man, confined to the antique age. Her galleries to-day are full of the work of aliens, Florentines, Umbrians, Sienese and Neapolitans, while her museums are crowded with her futile imitations of the matchless work of the Greeks. Her materialism has always been almost transcendental. In her strange heart Aphrodite was born again as Venus, the goddess of animal pleasure and fecundity; Ares was changed into Mars, the God, not of Virtue, but of Fight. She stole the world from us to give it us again in her own likeness, and refashioned the gods in the image of man. Well, that has always been her rôle in life. In her high embassy of reconciliation between heaven and earth she has spoiled God and man for her own glory. A vandal from her birth for whom might was right, she has understood nothing but success and pleasure, and these are her virtues. She conquered Greece as Germany conquered France, like a Barbarian, using the genius of the conquered to celebrate her own glory; and the most living things in Rome to-day are either Greek or imitations of them. It is this fact which places the Museo Nazionale so far above any other museum in Rome; it possesses actual Greek work, while the others are full of the realistic, heavy, and imitative works of Barbarian Rome.

Among the few precious fragments from the hands of the Greeks which are to be found in the Museo Nazionale, it is scarcely surprising that that should

be the most beautiful which is furthest from the Roman understanding. I mean those reliefs of the fifth century B.C. which, carved about a throne, represent the Birth of Aphrodite. The goddess rises from the sea veiled, as it were, in the salt sea water, to be received by the Hours, two robust and supple girls whom she embraces half unconsciously, while they veil very sweetly her cold nudity. She rises to the sound of a pipe, to the sharp yet languid odour of incense in the nimble morning air, that seems to have sent a delicious shiver along her virginal body. Passionate and noble in her divine innocence, she turns towards one of the Hours almost as maidenly as herself, with a look, is it of welcome? Her hair, caught by a narrow band, falls on her shoulders heavily, and under her dripping tunic, delicate and light, one sees the tender body, the virginal breasts, the long throat and girlish limbs. And here, too, not less than in the Christian Nativity, so moving in its simplicity, the emotion we receive is as profoundly religious as it is human. Those two figures, one of whom sits naked, her legs crossed, unconscious of her own loveliness, playing on a pipe, while the other, chastely veiled, throws the incense on the altar, are, with the Hours who assist, just the angels of the Greek world, less incredible by far than ours, than that host in heaven for instance that has, it often seems, so little in common with us for all those strange songs of goodwill that never came true.

It is into another and less real if more actual world that we come when we stand before the Apollo, carved after an early work by Pheidias. It is not God who has here put on humanity, but man who is become

God and is about, as we know, to return to the world.

Nothing, however, of that great age at its dawn in the work of Pheidias is to be found in Rome, unless we accept the magnificent statue of a Kneeling Youth, really a fragment but superb alike in its marvellous texture, its delicate *nuances*, and its finish, or the Juno Ludovisi as examples of it ; and indeed that head is one of the most majestic and beautiful fragments left in the City. ' It is like a poem of Homer,' wrote Goethe in his enthusiasm. Yes, it is like a poem of Homer translated by Virgil.

That Aphrodite who came into the world so innocently in the fifth century might seem to be but the elder sister, or just to have grown up perhaps and to have passed into the sunlight, losing something, it is true, of the beautiful severity that was part of her youth and her godhead, in the draped statue which passes under her name. She stands before us like some exquisite vision clothed from head to foot in a long, clinging veil that only half conceals the wonder of her loveliness. The influence of the fifth century is there, as it is though more subtly in the Dionysus from Hadrian's Villa, a fine copy of a Greek original in bronze, cast probably in the early years of the fourth century.

Those adorable figures of Ariadne sleeping and of Sappho are copies of works by some pupil of Praxiteles, and with them, lovely as they are, we are already come to the decadence. With the Pugilist at Rest we are in the midst of the realism that Rome could so well understand and that was to take refuge from itself in the sensuality of such a figure as the Hermaphrodite. But perhaps the happiest and certainly the most



*Photo. Anderson*

APHRODITE



charming examples we find here of Roman work are the stucco reliefs which once decorated the walls of a Roman house that stood close to the Palazzo Farnesina in the time of the early Empire. They represent scenes of country life, and of certain religious mysteries in which we see women dancing and sacrificing to Priapus in the feast of Dionysus. Nothing more exquisite than those three lithe and charming figures who, clothed in supple draperies, sacrifice to the God, is to be found in Rome. And indeed we may only compare with them their sister, she, who from the height of a great rock, turns to her companions with I know not what welcome or encouragement in a gesture altogether naïve and lovely. It is as though suddenly, amid all this dead beauty, one had heard in the still sunshine some secret and youthful voice chanting in a garden the verses of Theocritus.

## II. THE CAPITOLINE MUSEUM

It is an emotion less fresh and less exquisite that we receive in the Museum of the Capitol. One of the first of those Roman galleries which later became so famous, it was founded by Innocent x., and is indeed only of later foundation than the collection in the Palazzo dei Conservatori which was established by Sixtus iv. in 1471. But if it be less precious than the Museo Nazionale it is far more famous, being indeed the most famous museum in Rome, since it possesses the 'Dying Gaul,' the 'Wounded Amazon,' the 'Faun,' after Praxiteles, and the 'Aphrodite.' But what need can there be to speak of such things as these, or what joy in remembering them? They have become the

commonplaces of the schools, and great as they are, their fame has consumed them.

For long called the 'Gladiator'<sup>1</sup> the nationality of the figure which we know as the 'Dying Gaul' is to be recognised by the necklace, the hair brushed back from the forehead, the moustache, and the shield, and trumpet beside him. No Roman sculptor was ever capable of creating a figure so wonderful in its vitality, dignity, and modelling. At Pergamene, however, Attalus had set up statues in bronze to commemorate his victories over the Gauls, and this figure is probably a contemporary copy of one of those Greek works, the material being of a local marble of Asia Minor and the execution genuine Pergamene work.

The origin of the 'Wounded Amazon' is more doubtful; one hesitates whether to attribute it to Pheidias or Polyclitus. There are at least three types of this subject, the first of which, after Polyclitus as it is thought, is represented in the Vatican; the second, of which a statue is also to be found in the Vatican, is best represented by the Capitoline statue; and the third, the so-called Mattei type, also in the Vatican, which does not represent a wounded Amazon at all, but one using her spear to mount her horse. All these types probably go back to the statues of the Amazons in the Temple at Ephesus of which Pliny speaks. The first type is generally attributed to Polyclitus; but with the second no decision seems possible. We see an Amazon with her right arm raised, leaning probably on a spear. Her head is bent and her *chiton*, fastened on the left shoulder, has been slipped from her right by her left hand, which still holds the drapery at

<sup>1</sup> Among others by Byron in the well-known verses in *Childe Harold*.



her waist, so as to keep it away from a wound under the right breast. This second type is softer and more sentimental than the first, and may well have been a sort of protest against its inconsistencies.

In the 'Aphrodite' of the Capitol, we come for the first time upon a copy or adaptation of the most famous work of Praxiteles, the 'Aphrodite' of Cnidus. The best and most beautiful copy at present known to us is, we are told, that in the Vatican which the weird modesty of the Popes,<sup>1</sup> so astonishing and disconcerting, has covered from the waist down with a hideous petticoat of stucco. But since that is hidden from us, and we must perforce sacrifice our joy for the sake, I suppose, of our weaker brethren—the priests, whose minds are, it seems, so sadly susceptible to beastliness—for a time, yet only for a time, we must be content with the 'Aphrodite' of the Capitol.

The story runs that when Phryne, whose glorified beauty we may see perhaps in the 'Aphrodite,' tricked Praxiteles into naming his finest statues by telling him his studio was on fire, he exclaimed that all his labour was lost if the 'Satyr' and the 'Eros' were destroyed. She chose the 'Eros' and dedicated it at Thespieae, but the 'Satyr' was set up in the street of Tripods in Athens. It was copied many times; the most famous replica that has come down to us being the 'Faun' of the Capitol. Soulless, happy as a bird is happy in the sunshine and the wind, the 'Satyr'

<sup>1</sup> How are we to explain this extraordinary puritanism so amazing and amusing on the part of the Papacy, especially when we remember past years, and that we enter St. Peter's church by doors ornamented with every disgraceful episode of a debased mythology? Can this be an example of the old adage, 'The devil was sick, the devil a saint would be . . .'? Hypocrisy can go no further.

of Praxiteles appears to us as altogether human in bodily form save for his pointed ears. Leaning on the trunk of a tree, a leopard skin across his shoulders, he is resting for a little while in the genial heat, a pipe in his right hand, smiling faintly for joy of the long afternoon to come. Here again, as so often, before Greek work, in our hearts we find a subtle music, as though all their thought and effort had been, as indeed it was, to evoke that harmony in the soul, between body and spirit, which has been so unaccountably lost, yes, in the city of Rome.

But after all what is perhaps the most satisfying, because the most sincere, of the works of art to be found in the Capitoline Museum is the vast series of portrait busts of the Emperors, the most perfect, I suppose, and certainly the most complete in existence. Linger there, we seem for a moment to understand what this vulgarity was which we call the Roman Empire; we are able to apprehend, as it were, though never to understand, its common virtues, its sense of order at least, of the need of order, as well as its materialism and blindness to the necessities of the hearts of men. No one, as it seems to me, can pass through that hall without a certain shrinking and disgust, yes, at our very selves, our own civilisation which we see so surely mirrored there. This is the plutocracy, blatant, assured, and never to be shamed from which we too are suffering. The soul, with all its dreams, its tragic hopes, its joy and profound ennui, its weariness of the world, has never been even understood by these men whom the world has satisfied or driven mad. It existed no more for them than for the millionaire of our time. And as we look into the

sad, disillusioned face of Aurelius, so indifferent and defeated, or into the eager countenance of Julian, we seem to understand that even for such men the soul, which, often ugly and debased, yet shines with an incalculable simplicity in the faces of the poor, had been smothered at birth by the omnipotence of the world which they seemed to possess, but whose chattels they were, so that even the best of them, as Trajan or Aurelius, seem to us like prisoners who have lost all thought or desire of freedom, and are indeed incapable of anything but a sort of domination in which all has been lost but a fond assurance of their own omnipotence.

### III. THE VATICAN MUSEUM

If the Capitoline Museum comes at last to be full of disappointment, incapable of giving us any profound emotion by reason of the materialism, as we say, of the Roman work to be found there, copies of the exquisite and serious work of the Greeks from which all that was really living has unaccountably vanished, what are we to say of the Vatican galleries which are filled with works of far less account, and without, or almost without, an original statue, are crowded with reproductions of classical models? Indeed it is as though we had come into a vast necropolis, some mighty cemetery gleaming horribly with marble, terrible with the rude and feeble gestures of the dead, the gestures of the body from which the soul has long since vanished away. They are in truth but monuments of vanity, these countless statues, the vanity of the rich in the work of artists that they cannot feel or even under-

stand. For these strange caricatures of statues that once were living in the world are a part of the ostentation of Rome, they were made, not for love, but for pride, that some wealthy senator or favourite might hear the echo of an immortal fame and read the names of Polyclitus, of Scopas, of Praxiteles, of Lysippus on the statues that decorated his house. The only possible value of such works for us consists in the material truthfulness with which they have been copied from the original. Not that we can hope to find in them even a shadow of the beauty of the Greek work that is lost for ever, but that we may perhaps hope to know—if that be of any value in itself—something of the gesture, attitude, and shape of things which were once part of the most beautiful treasure in the world. We shall assuredly get but little further satisfaction out of a collection, which, renovated and repaired, as it has been again and again, no longer represents even the work of the Romans in its integrity, but is now the caricature of a caricature. For, if the Roman work was originally dull and heavy and base, what are we to think of it now that it has passed through the cunning, sensual hands of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, which restored and repolished what even at first had been a sort of grimace, a mere imitation of a beauty they could neither feel nor express?

This being so, we shall pass by the smirking insincerity of such a thing as the 'Apollo Belvedere,' and concentrate our attention on such realistic work as the great 'Torso' or the 'Apoxyomenos' or the 'Antinous' among the statues, and to such busts as that of the 'Young Augustus.'

The 'Torso' is obviously the work of an Attic artist for a Roman patron, and like all the work of that school is full of exaggeration. It is, of course, but a fragment of a once perfect work which is generally supposed to have represented the Cyclops Polyphemus seated on a rock by the seashore, shading his eyes with his hand and looking for Galatea. There can be but little doubt that the original work of which this was a copy was of the period after Lysippus. And however fine that original may have been, we have here, in spite of the admiration of Michelangelo, a representation of the human form at once decadent and conventional. Who knows how far the minute and hard realism of such a thing as this might not have led the great Florentine in his naïve admiration of it, had he not cared too greatly for the beauty of his material to do more than allow it to express itself?

We come upon the work of Lysippus himself, though only, as it were, in a translation, in the 'Apoxyomenos,' which is perhaps the most precious statue in the gallery. Lysippus, we are told, was an impressionist, that is to say he was not concerned so much with the actual imitation of nature, as with the correctness and vividness of his expression of it. In the statue of an Athlete scraping the oil and sand of the Palæstra from his right arm with a strigil held in his left hand, he seems by no means to have made a portrait statue, but to have summed up his impressions of the Athlete generally, to have made in fact an ideal statue, or rather not to have imitated life, but to have expressed it. The pose is exquisite and vigorous and almost momentary in its lightness. The gesture is noble and free, and the whole statue of which

this is a copy must have been of a splendid beauty. Pliny tells us that when Agrippa brought it from Greece to adorn the baths, Tiberius admired it so much that he carried it away to his own palace, but was compelled to restore it by the people, who mobbed him when he next appeared among them.

What Roman taste was, even among the most cultivated of those who, with so strange an assurance, had thrust their ideas and government upon the world, we may understand from the praise Pliny gives to the Laocoon group which stands to-day in the beautiful Cortile del Belvedere which Bramante made for Julius II.

' . . . The Laocoon,' he tell us, ' . . . which stands in the palace of the Emperor Titus . . . may be considered superior to all other works both in painting and sculpture. The whole group, the father—the boys and the awful folds of the serpents—were formed out of a single block in accordance with a vote of the Senate by Agesander, Polydorus, and Athenodorus, Rhodian sculptors of the highest merit.' In accordance with a vote of the Senate ! It is almost as though we heard the voice of one of our own countrymen. But the finest things in the world are not achieved by the vote of an assembly but by the genius of a man for whom the ' vote of the Senate ' must always be an impertinence. And as a matter of fact the Laocoon, far from being ' superior to all other works both in painting and sculpture,' is just an example of what sculpture should not attempt. That it is falsely restored goes for nothing or very little ; it is the motive that is inadequately rendered and expressed. And we feel that this ecstasy of pain is invoked not for any high purpose

or on its own account, but that the sculptor may seize the opportunity of producing a decorative effect while, at the same time, he shows us how realistic his work can be. One cannot deny a certain technical achievement to the group, but it is displayed at the expense of every other beauty and truth, and fails altogether to convince us of itself.

As for the 'Apollo Belvedere' it will be enough to place beside it a single slab from the frieze or a mutilated torso from the pediment of the Parthenon to make its insincerity obvious to all. Beside a genuine work of Hellenic art it cannot live for an instant, since it is an imitation that is intolerable alike in its pose and workmanship. That this sentimental and vulgar figure can ever have deceived the world might seem impossible, but that the words of Winckelmann, the verse of Byron remain to prove how infinitely man may deceive himself. Perhaps the best statue in the Vatican is that which the puritanism of the Church will not allow us to see, the 'Aphrodite' called of Cnidus, though it is but a free copy of that lost glory. But indeed the whole place is full of infinite disappointment and weariness. There does not seem to me to be a single statue or relief here that could for a moment be placed beside the work of Donatello or Luca della Robbia without exposing its want of spontaneity and life. More and more, as one wanders up and down these vast galleries, one feels one is in a cemetery, crowded with the rifled tombs of the gods who are not here but immortal as of old, on the mountains, and in the valleys and the fields of spring.

### XXX

#### THE FOUNTAINS

HORACE tells us somewhere that he is the friend of fountains, and, indeed, no true Roman, whether of the ancient or the modern world, can ever have been without some sentiment for them, since, in fact, they are the joy of Rome, her voice, as it were, a pleasant and a joyful voice ; for no city in Europe is so truly a city of running waters. All day long they waken in the heart some mystery of delight and refreshment ;—the slender jets of water wavering between the cypresses in the shadow, flashing in the sun, splashing among the statues on the cold marble. And their song in the cool, diaphanous mornings of spring is a song of life, of joy, of the brief joy of life.

And like most of that which is eternal in Rome, which is wholly characteristic of her and her own, the fountains, the song of the fountains, comes to us hardly changed from the Romans who, in the splendour of their pride, conceived this luxury ; for it was Agrippa, the son-in-law of Augustus, who first dreamed of this beauty and refreshment, and endowed the city with a song. To Agrippa Rome owed much, but among his marvellous and enormous works nothing was at once so original, so noble, and so enduring as this which he contrived during the three years of his ædileship, building at his own cost two aqueducts, a hundred





*Photo. Brogi*

ACQUA PAOLINA



and thirty reservoirs, a naumachia, several baths and piscinæ, and more than two hundred fountains, which, in many disguises, for the most part remain to us, they and their children, the only joyful things in the fallen city.

The splendid gift of Agrippa was added to again and again. Caligula and Claudius, not to be outdone, built two new aqueducts, which brought to the city as much water, indeed, as all those that were before them, till in Trajan's time Rome had more than ten aqueducts feeding some thirteen hundred fountains.

And these joyful and pleasant waters, flashing and singing in the hot streets, the quiet piazzas, the shady gardens, were the pride of the people of Rome, and, in some sort, their most precious possession, so that at last some mystery seems to have passed into them, even the life of the City itself, and we find Rome defending her waters when she could scarcely hold her walls, with all the fierceness of a last hope. Were they not her life, her last luxury, her last joy? Nor was she robbed of them till in 537 Vitiges and his Goths, masters of the Campagna, broke the long lines of the aqueducts, and left them as we now see them, more wonderful still than anything else within or without the City, lending their beauty to the tragic grandeur and solitude of the Campagna, the Latin plain; and Rome was silenced. That blow seems to have been fatal. From that day the City gradually became the appalling ruin that she remained through all the Middle Age: till in the fifteenth century the Popes of the Renaissance, wishing to restore to her the leadership of the world, gave her back her waters, and suddenly, in a moment, as though by enchantment, she arose

once more out of the wilderness and the ruins, healed and whole at the sound of that song.

Often very early in those spring mornings which are so fair in Rome, or maybe on an autumn evening, under a moon great and golden as the sun, I have wandered through the city of fountains for the sake of their song. It begins with the strange artificial voice of Bernini's Barcaccia in the Piazza di Spagna, where the Acqua Vergine falls humbly at the feet of Madonna, that galley of war shooting forth from her guns, not death, but refreshment. Then, as I pass into the silence up the beautiful Scala di Spagna, and turn towards the Pincio, presently, still far off, I hear the most beautiful voice in Rome, the single melody, languid, and full of mystery, and all enchantment, of the fountain before the Villa Medici, where, under the primeval ilex, a single jet of water towers like some exquisite slender lily, to droop, to fall in unimagined loveliness into the brimming vase of marble, so admirably simple and in place under those sacred trees, before that lofty villa, which, in some sort, dominates the whole City, and whence one may look across the towers and domes to the Capitol, to S. Peter's, to the Campagna stretching away to the sea.

No other fountain in Rome is at once so simple and so beautiful as this, nor is there another which commands so wide and so majestic a prospect. And yet, if one passes down the slope of the Pincio into the Piazza del Popolo, and so crossing the Ponte Margherita, and passing at last under the height of the Vatican, comes at last into the Piazza di S. Pietro, one finds there, in one of the holiest and most famous places in the City, two fountains, quite as beautiful in their

way, though truly less simple, singing ever before the threshold of the shrine of the Apostle. Rising in the shape, as it were, of *fleurs de lys*, the water harmonises perfectly, not only with the fountains themselves, but with the beautiful piazza in which they are so marvellously placed, forming together with it the masterpiece of Bernini. Here, indeed, we have a beauty wholly artificial and architectural, perhaps the one perfect thing that the seventeenth century contrived in that art. We shall find an early effort of that period more romantic, both in its situation and contrivance, if we climb the Janiculum, and passing along its height through the Passaggiata Margherita, come at last, above the Church of S. Pietro in Montorio, on the immense Acqua Paolina, the ancient Aqua Trajana, which draws its water from Lago di Bracciano, more than thirty miles away. The fountain, a huge façade, the work of Fontana and Maderna, under Paul v. in 1611, was built out of the materials of older buildings, the marble is from the Temple of Minerva in the Forum of Nerva, the granite pillars from the vestibule of old S. Peter's. In spite of the grandiose beauty which harmonises well with the site, it seems, perhaps—for here our eyes turn always back to the solitude of the Campagna—a mere empty boast, full of sound and fury signifying nothing.

From the Acqua Paolina, in my early morning pilgrimage, I always pass down into the Piazza d'Italia, and so across the Ponte Garibaldi, through the Via Arenula and the Via dei Falegnami into the Piazza Mattei, where, before the palace, stands the delicate and lovely Fountain of the Tortoises, built in 1585 by Giacomo della Porta and Taddeo Landini. Nothing in Rome

is more alluring in a certain lightness and finesse than this fountain, where four slim youths, grouped round a vase of water, hold each a tortoise, which drains the upper basin.

From here, it is but a step back into Piazza Benedetto Cairoli, and so through Via di Giubbonari in the Campo di Fiore and Piazza Farnese, whose two fountains remind us in their spacious setting of those in the Piazza di S. Pietro. Then crossing the Corso between the palaces we come to the Piazza Navona, where stands the most extraordinary, perhaps, of all Bernini's works, the brilliant but bizarre fountain with its obelisk and statues personifying the four great rivers of the world.

It is again to a work of Bernini we come, as, passing on through the City, we stand at last before the great fountain of Trevi, which resembles the Acqua Paolina, and which may be heard above all the noise of the piazza. And it is fitting that, since Rome is the city of fountains, to make sure of one's return to her, it should be necessary to make an offering, not at the grave of Romulus, nor at the shrine of S. Peter, but to the greatest and most famous of her fountains, for it is said, whoever, at the hour of departure, drinks a cup of the water of Trevi and pays for it, has not looked on Rome for the last time.

The hour of departure, if indeed you keep it in the time-honoured way, and make your offering there in Piazza Trevi, will lead you by the way of my morning pilgrimage, first into Piazza Barberini, where another of Bernini's fountains, the Fountain of the Triton, still stands, and then by the Via Quattro Fontane, past the four fountains, and so turning to the left

there, past the Acqua Felice into the Piazza delle Terme and the Railway Station. And it is well that your last thought in Rome, as indeed your first has been, should be one of astonishment, your last spectacle the sight of a fountain. For, as it happens, the modern Romans are not less in love with the sound and sight of running water than were their fathers of old. And while all the other fountains in Rome are restorations or works of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, here, for our encouragement, to greet us when we enter, to greet us when we depart, our Rome too has set up a great fountain of splashing water. Of all the modern works of art in Rome it pleases one most. It is true that it is vulgar, flamboyant, and eccentric, full, indeed, of every sort of astonishment. But in the luxury of its design, in the extraordinary gesture of its figures, in the splendour and gladness of its waters, it is to me a sign and a symbol of the new Rome, which, though she be indeed less noble, or at least less strong than of old, is yet living and ready to entertain us : and we too may hear in her streets, as Horace did so long ago 'The splash of fountains with jets of water clear.'

## XXXI

### THE PALACES AND VILLAS

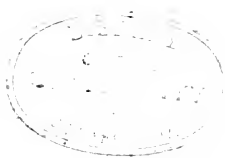
IN passing through almost all the cities of Italy—those cities which alone in the world might seem truly to vie in beauty with the country itself—really the first thing the traveller searches out is the great mediæval palace, Palazzo della Signoria, Palazzo del Municipio, Palazzo Comunale, which is often the oldest and almost certainly the most splendid building remaining in the city to this day. It is so in such places as we have loved—for instance, Florence, Siena, or Perugia—but in Rome it is not so. All our sojourn in Rome must be vain in its search for buildings of the Middle Age, and indeed, if we might judge alone by that, it might seem that for her the Middle Age had no existence. In other cities of Italy it has left plenty of memorials, but in Rome, nothing : it was too full of disturbance, and then when indeed, though late, it might have flowered with all the beauty we find in Florence, in Siena, in Pistoia, in Assisi, the Popes went into exile in Avignon, and the City was desolate. Thus, in looking at the secular buildings of the City, the earliest work we find that is not merely ruin is work of the Renaissance. The earliest palace is Palazzo Colonna, which was built by Pope Martin v. in 1430, when peace, though not yet actually achieved, had been assured ; but it has suffered from rebuilding





*Photo. Anderson*

PALAZZO GIKAUD-TORLONIA



and restoration. Its best claim on our notice to-day is probably its fine gallery of pictures.

A happier example of the art of the fifteenth century is to be found in the Palazzo Venezia, now threatened with destruction, which Pope Paul II., Bembo of Venice, built in the Florentine style about 1455, while he was still a Cardinal, with stones he had brought from the ruin of the Colosseum. Vasari attributes the design to Giuliano da Maiano, but he seems to have had no hand in it. One is in fact altogether at a loss to say to whom it is due. The most picturesque and massive of all Roman palaces, it was presented in 1560 by Pius IV., Medici, to the Republic of Venice, and so, in 1797, came into the hands of Austria, whose embassy it still is. And seeing how the Italians love the Austrians, and how much store Germany lays thereby, it is interesting to recall a custom of the *basso popolo* of the Eternal City in these days when our eyes too are set on Germany, and old customs are so unhappily dying out. For it is the custom of the *basso popolo*, when one of their number dies and is buried, not without ceremony, by the *società* to which he belonged, and all his comrades follow his coffin, as they pass the Palazzo Venezia, the Austrian Embassy, to express their regret, not in an undertone or whisper, that they are not following the coffin of his excellency, the Austrian Ambassador. While men have memories, that wish will be in the hearts if not on the tongues not of the *basso popolo* alone. Yet Germany lays great store by the Triple Alliance. May all that she sets store by prove as empty as this !

If we follow the Corso Vittorio Emanuele downwards towards the Tiber, we shall presently come to the

immense pile of the Cancelleria, which was begun in 1486 by some Tuscan architect for Cardinal Raffaele Riario. It is one of the noblest buildings in Rome, its beautiful arcaded court, partly built from old materials, being perhaps its most original feature. The property of the Pope, it is the only palace in Rome which the Italians still allow to remain in his hands.

So with the end of the fifteenth century Rome began to be once more the city of palaces under the Renaissance Popes as under the Roman emperors. It was the time of Julius II. and of Leo X., of Raphael, of Michelangelo, of Bramante, of Peruzzi, and Sangallo. Peruzzi built, in 1508, for the Sienese banker, Agostino Chigi, the Farnesina, which Raphael, Giulio Romano, and Giovanni da Udine decorated for him with the Story of Psyche, in twelve scenes enclosed with garlands. The ceiling alone is covered, the scenes being confined to that part of the story which took place in Olympus. It was probably intended to cover the walls with the more human part of the story. Unhappily this was never achieved, and what we have has been spoiled by the unhappy restoration of Maratta. In another apartment Raphael has painted, with more charm too, Galatea borne across the sea in a sea-shell surrounded by Nymphs, Tritons, and Loves; while to the left Sebastiano del Piombo has painted Polyphemus trying in vain to move her with love songs. The ceiling in this room is the work of Peruzzi.

The Farnesina passed from the Chigi in 1580 to Cardinal Alessandro Farnese by inheritance. This family, which became extinct in 1731, had already built, in 1516, by the hand of Antonio da Sangallo, the



*Photo. Anderson*

VILLA MEDICI



magnificent Palazzo Farnese, perhaps the most splendid palace in Rome, which Michelangelo, Vignola, and Giacomo della Porta decorated and finished. When the Farnese became extinct in the eighteenth century, this palace, which since 1874 has been the French Embassy, passed with the Farnesina to the King of Naples.

We come upon Sangallo's work again in the Palazzo Sacchetti, but indeed the palaces of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are innumerable, among the more famous being the Palazzo Corsini, Palazzo Borghese, Palazzo Chigi, and Palazzo Barberini, which is a work of Maderna and perhaps the finest of these buildings, which announce the decadence and are full of faults of construction and taste, but sumptuous and splendid. The Palazzo Doria-Pamphili, built in 1655, one may examine within to some extent, for it contains a gallery of pictures, among them being the most splendid portrait in Rome, Velasquez' Innocent x., and an early work by Titian, a Salome.

But if the palaces are, in spite of their size and splendour, a little dull, a little lacking in interest and beauty, so that nowhere in Rome may we find one that moves us as the Palazzo Pubblico in Siena does, or as many of these wonderful buildings on the Grand Canal in Venice contrive to do, it is quite otherwise with the Villas. Rome is unique among the cities of the world in possessing them, and they are unique in their loveliness and charm. They have nothing in common with anything in England, but one might feel something of their charm if Hampton Court Palace with its gardens were suddenly to be found in the midst of London. And yet, even then, there

would be something too much, and a certain artificiality would be lacking, an artificiality that makes of the gardens and parks of the Roman villa only a continuation as it were of the saloons, which makes of the saloons only a cooler and more private part of the garden. Such were those villas, almost numberless, of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Albani, Medici, Mattei, Corsini, Ludovisi, Negrone, Borghese, Pamphili. If to-day, in those which remain to us after the awful vandalism of the nineteenth century, neglect has sometimes allowed Nature so free a hand that they have changed their character, it is always with regret we see it, and yet who can deny the mysterious charm of lichen-grown statues, tangled woods, grass-grown paths and silent fountains, among which in spring the wildflowers run unchecked ?

But Italy is not England. Nature, here in Italy, is very surely master or servant, and might seem never able to be our friend as in England. Here the sun is god, and your garden must be artificial if you would have a garden at all. Flowers are an affair of pots and careful tending, and save in spring, one must in fact do without them on any other terms. Nor does one need their colour, when earth and sky, two blinding jewels, make all invisible but their own splendour. One thinks only of the shadow, of the shade, and so, instead of a lawn, one plants a bosco of ilex, instead of walks between the flowers, alley-ways of cypresses, of laurel, of sacred ilex, while, for a flower-bed, one builds a fountain.

The Roman villa garden is just that ; it has an air of the eighteenth century ; it is full of silence. The cypresses are set thickly in a half-circle about a statue,



or in long alley-ways that lead to a fountain ; vista passes into vista, till you are led to lose yourself in the twilight of the bosco, in the midst of which you find yourself suddenly at the foot of a magical staircase of stone, wide and spacious and beautiful, and passing up it, you come at last to a little summer-house of marble, just above the tree-tops, and there, far below you, is Rome.

Or again, you pass from terrace to terrace, between the trees, half in fear, while fountain calls to fountain, and the cypresses burn ever in the sun, and the air is heavy with their incense.

And everywhere there are fountains—at the end of every way, at the turning of every path, in the midst of every cloister, at the end of every terrace. And these are the Rome gardens—only we miss the flowers.

This spaciousness, these silences, these lines that are indeed architectural and contrived with a profound art, are Roman, are classic. Ancient Rome must have conceived of a garden, one may think, somewhat in this fashion : on these lines the gardens of Lucullus were planted and built. Is that why they appealed so strongly to the Renaissance ?

But of all these villas with their marvellous gardens which were once the glory of Rome, but few remain. Of those which are still left to us, perhaps the best known are the Villa Pamphili, the Villa Medici, and the Villa Borghese. The first is of an incomparable loveliness, the second of an incomparable mystery, the third is less rare, and of late has become one of the playgrounds of Rome, larger and more spaciouly beautiful but less fashionable than the Pincio. But

in truth the Villa Borghese, with its gardens and park, is still one of the most enchanting things in the City. Yes, in spite of the vandalism that would turn a great part of it into a model farm, it remains to console us, since we have seen so much that was perfect turned into building sites by rascals for rascals. And then it adds to its other delights a treasure of art, a collection of pictures that is the finest in the City after that of the Vatican.

The Villa was built in the early years of the seventeenth century by Cardinal Scipione Borghese, nephew of Pope Paul v.; and was bought, with its magnificent collection of pictures, and beautiful gardens and parks, by the Italian government for £144,000, much less than its real value, in 1901.

On entering the Villa we find that the spacious saloons on the ground floor are devoted to the collection of sculpture which was so unfortunately depleted by Prince Camillo Borghese, who sold more than two hundred pieces to Napoleon I. for the Louvre. There remain here, however, perhaps the most famous works of Bernini and of Canova—the group of Apollo and Daphne, and the portrait statue as Venus of Pauline Buonaparte, the wife of Prince Camillo, a work which, as it is said, he allowed no one to look on but himself.

But it is really the Gallery of Pictures which calls for our wonder and admiration, since it is, perhaps, the finest private collection of the Italian masterpieces of the sixteenth century anywhere to be found. A few pictures by the Florentines of the fifteenth century serve, as it were, as introduction. Among these are a fine Madonna and Child with St. John and Angels of the school of Botticelli, and a Madonna



THE VILLA BORGHESE



and Child with S. John, by Lorenzo di Credi. The Florentine school of the sixteenth century is represented by a fine portrait of a Cardinal and a picture of Tobias and the Angel, by Pontormo. As for the Umbrians, we find there a Crucifixion with SS. Christopher and Jerome, an early work by Fiorenzo di Lorenzo; a portrait of Perugino, an early work by Raphael; and the celebrated Entombment, painted in 1507 by the same master, as well as a Venus by Baldassare Peruzzi.

But the true glory of the gallery consists not only, or even chiefly, in the work of Raphael, but in three works by the greatest master of that or any other period, Titian, who is represented by three pictures, the first belonging to his youth, the others to his old age.

The Sacred and Profane Love, painted about 1512 for Niccolò Aurelio, Grand Chancellor of Venice, is the highest achievement of Titian's art at the end of his Giorgionesque period. It has been in this collection since 1613, when it was called '*Beltà diornata e Beltà ornata*'—'Beauty unadorned and Beauty adorned.' In fact, the name it now bears, which has so puzzled the world, does not occur till the end of the eighteenth century, when it seems to have been given it by the Germans. For us, at least, it can have no authority, the subject of the picture being merely a moment of beauty,—a moment gone, but for Titian's genius, while we try to apprehend it, in the golden summer heat, under the trees by a fountain of water.

In the Education of Cupid we see a work of Titian's late period, full of mastery and a wonderful originality, but certainly without the sheer lyrical

and mysterious beauty of that early masterpiece. And yet each picture is in its own mood unapproachable. In the first we see all the brilliance and poetry of youth, in the second, the absolute triumph of an art which has been immensely successful, and has paid the price of triumph.

The third picture here by Titian, the *S. Dominic*, is also a work of his later period, though scarcely so late as the *Education of Cupid*. It seems to have been painted about 1565. It is a very strong and impressive picture, full of all those intellectual qualities which we find in his work of this time, and by no means without a profound spiritual power. He seems to have set himself a problem in colour of the most difficult and intricate sort, and to have solved it with his usual ease and harmony.

From Titian we pass to the work of his pupils, Paris Bordone in a *Jupiter and Antiope*, and Jacopo Bassano in a *Last Supper*, and a picture of the *Trinity*; to the work of his contemporaries in the *Lucrece* and the *Madonna with SS. Francis and Jerome* of Palma Vecchio, and the *Madonna with S. Onofrio and a Bishop*, and the *Portrait of a Man*, of Lorenzo Lotto; while the work of his predecessors is represented by the *Portrait of a Man*, by Antonello da Messina.

Nor are the North Italian schools of Ferrara, Bologna, and Parma unrepresented. In the first we have the fine and magical *Circe*, by Dosso Dossi, and the *Holy Family* and the *Landscape* by his brother, Battista di Dosso, the *Descent from the Cross*, by Ortolano. In the second, the exquisite *S. Stephen*, by Francia, the academic *Caccia di*



*Photo. Anderson*

SACRED AND PROFANE LOVE  
TITIAN

*Villa Borghese*





Diana, by Domenichino. In the third, the splendid Danae, by Correggio, the fine Portrait by Parmigiano.

But, after all, what we have come here to see is the Sacred and Profane Love, by Titian, and that will lead us, not from picture to picture in a sudden enthusiasm for painting, but most certainly back again into the gardens, where the world is so sleepily golden in the heat, and the shade so cool and grateful. There we shall linger till, from the far-away city, the Ave Mary rings from all the cupolas, and we must return down the long alleys in the softly fading light, stealing softly, half reluctantly, out of the world of dreams back into the streets and the ways of men.

## XXXII

### THE CAMPAGNA

ROME possesses nothing half so lovely, half so precious, half so venerable, as the Campagna, in which she lies like a ship in the midst of the sea, now just visible over the billows, now lost altogether in that vast solitude of which, for the most part, she is oblivious. My happiest hours during all my sojourns in Rome have been spent in the Campagna, at all hours of the day, at every season of the year.

This immense and universal thing which lies unregarded at the gates of the Eternal City is the one Roman thing that I have been able to love absolutely without reserve or any after thought. I loved it at first sight, and to leave it still brings tears to my eyes. And yet I have felt no intimacy with it, as I have with the Umbrian valleys, and the moorlands, the hills and the sea of the West Country whence I am sprung. It is too vast and too silent for intimacy : but it has my fear and love as God has them, because it is greater than I, and in some sort has produced me. It has, too, the indefinite beauty of all supernatural things. One may find there always all that is in one's heart, and each will find what he brings and the reward of which he is worthy. It is too beautiful to praise and too mysterious, too holy, to explain or to describe. You may map all its roads and name all its ruins,



BOSCO SACCO, CAMPAGNA



number the arches of its aqueducts, and call all its towns and villages by name, and when you have finished, you are aware you have done nothing, and you find yourself at last speaking of it as every one must do, as it were in images, with vague words of beauty and mystery and love, as of a place seen in a vision, as the English speak of the sea. For, as the sea is the secret of England, so the Campagna is the secret of Rome ; it haunts the City, and the majesty and largeness of its silence are the springs of its immortality. Nor may you long escape it, for all the great ways lead to it at last, and it surges against every gate.

All unaware of this world of inviolate silence which guards the Eternal City as no other city was ever guarded, you catch sight of it first, perhaps, at evening from the Pincio, or in the early morning from the Janiculum, or at noonday from the bizarre portals of S. Giovanni in Laterano, or at sunset from the quietness of the Aventine. From wherever you first see it, it calls you instantly in its solemn immensity, its vast indwelling strength, its ruined splendour, across which the broken arches of the aqueducts stagger still, and the vague white roads, lined with empty and rifled tombs, wander aimlessly, losing themselves in the silence and vastness that only the mountains may contain. And it is the mountains which hem in the Campagna, the most beautiful mountains in the world.

Wherever you may go in Rome, after that first revelation, whatever you may see, before whatever shrine you may kneel, it is the Campagna which is in your heart, for you have discovered Rome, the soul of Rome. Did you think, then, it was this trumpery ruin or that, the Colosseum, a heap of cruel bricks,

S. Peter's, a vast and empty tomb, that had captured the world? But it is Rome that is eternal, and you will find her in the Campagna.

You will come to it first, doubtless, half unaware, as I did, toward the end of the day, perhaps after visiting S. Sebastiano, on the Via Appia. You will think to venture only so far as the tomb of Cæcilia Metella, but if you go so far you will never really come back; the sunset will find you still following that marvellous ruined road between the tombs that ends in nothing, with gaunt ruins of the broken aqueducts ever going along with you, and when at last the sunset finds you far from home, and after sunset night, you will return changed for ever by those few short hours, and the whole world will have for you, as for me, a new and more mysterious meaning.

And you will return, often you will return, hours, days, weeks, months will be consumed on that most ancient way, where the broken marble lies upon the stones that Cæsar trod, and the dead are more friendly than the living.

Though it were without history or renown, and man had given it no name, this unbroken wilderness would yet hold us by reason of the splendour of its form, its vastness, and silence, the breadth of its undulations, the transparency of its light, the beauty of its colour, the nobility of the mountains that contain it. But seeing that it is the cradle of our history, and that its name is Latium, to look upon it rouses within us much the same emotion as that with which, after long absence, we look upon our home. Nothing that man has dared to do or to think, no sorrow he has suffered, nor passion he has endured or conquered, his pro-



*Photo. Anderson*

VIA APPIA





foundest desires, his most tenacious hate, his most splendid domination, his most marvellous love, nothing that is his is a stranger there. Of all those forces it is a monument the grandest and the most terrible, the monument of man—a vast graveyard.

It is this one comes to realise at last, as day after day, week after week, one passes along that ancient Appian Way, between the crumbling tombs. Here and there we may find them still, the likeness of our brother carved in relief, some thought of his about it all, a few Latin words, part of an inscription, half hidden with the grass and the flowers. And as night overtakes one on that marvellous road, when the splendour of sunset is faded, and the stars one by one have scattered the heavens with hope, our thoughts turn almost in self-defence, in that solemn loneliness, from death to resurrection. In the immense silence that nothing may break our imagination sinks beneath the lonely majesty of that desert, littered with the monsters of old forgotten religions, full of the dead things of Paganism and Christianity, the bones of Saints, the mighty trunks of forgotten gods.

What more is there to come out of that vast grave, that marvellous solitude?



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